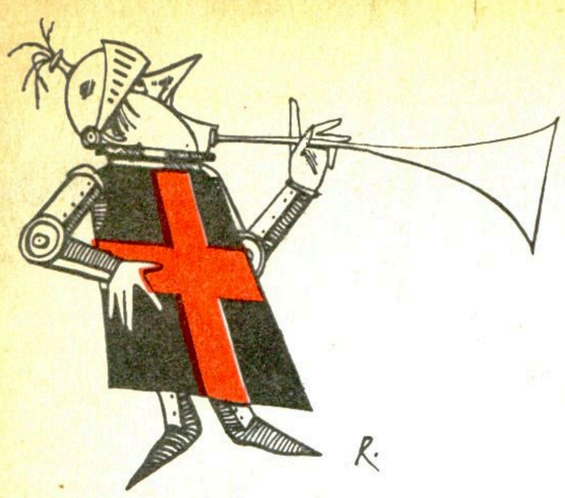

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MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

80p

NO. 788, FRIDAY, 28 FEBRUARY, 1992

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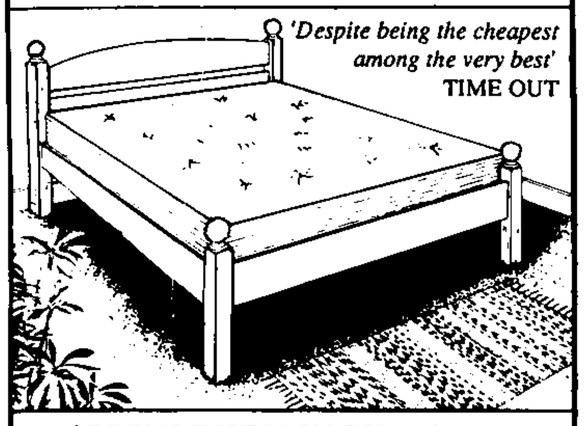

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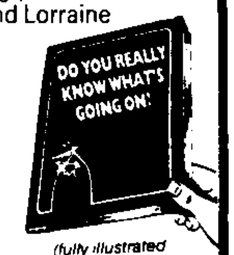

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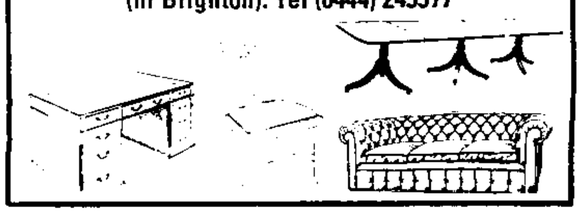

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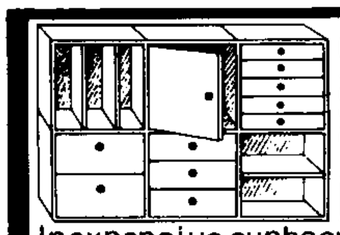

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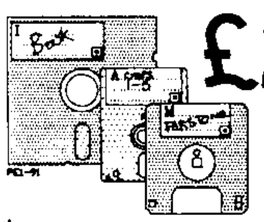

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Grippy.

ONE OF the differences between greatness and mere eccentricity, is an ability in the truly great *to draw out the genius* in another.

So it was with some smacking of the lips that we heard of a recent tasting organized by Decanter Magazine.

Three of Scotland's most lauded malt whiskies were to be rated in terms of 'partnership appeal' with that other great Scottish contribution to world gastronomy - *smoked Speyside salmon.*

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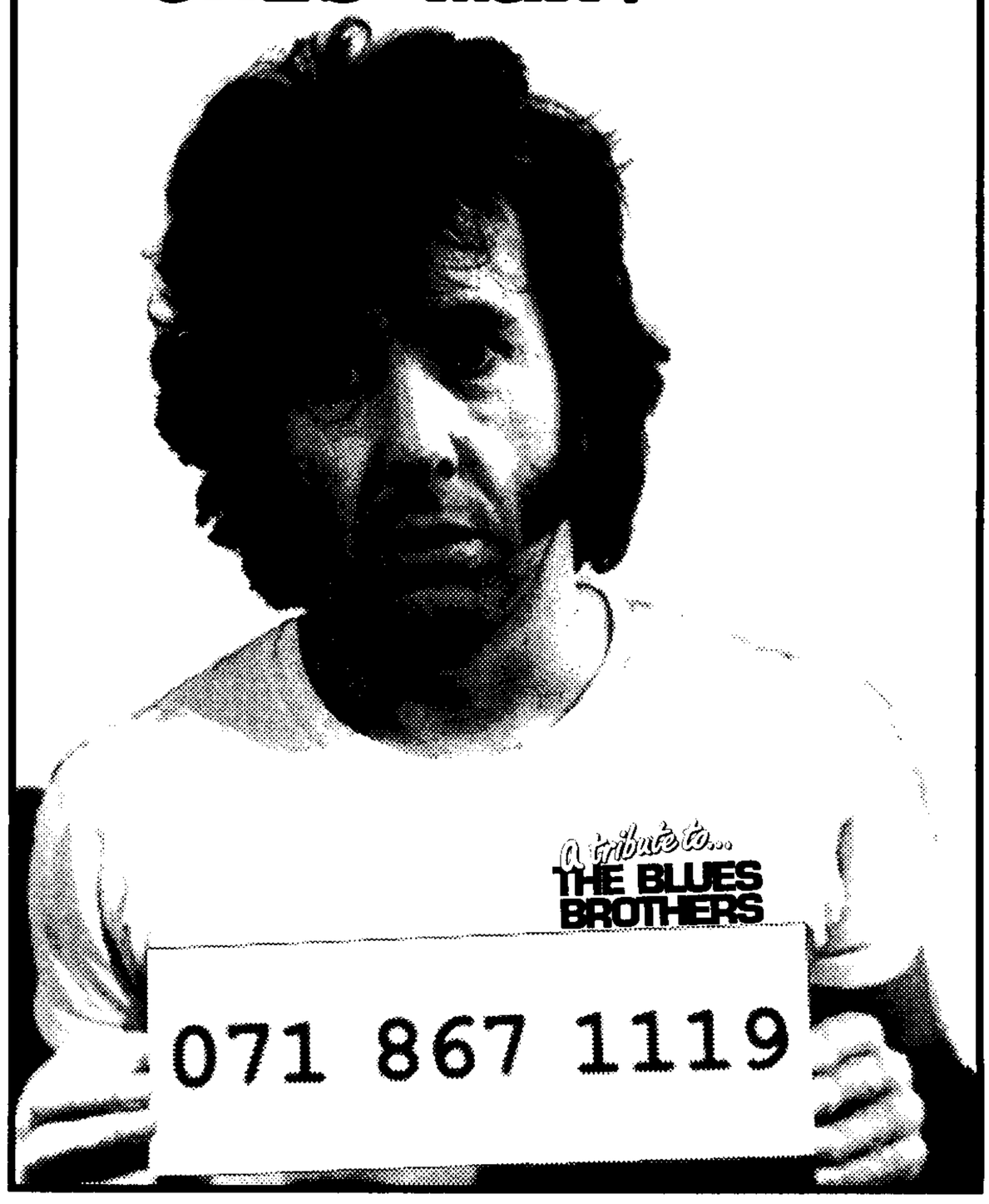

Gnome

THERE IS no crisis at Lloyds. I can state that with great authority being a working name, the chairman of a firm of underwriters and a member of the independent team investigating the world's oldest insurance market.

The issues are necessarily complicated, but two examples should be sufficient to show the underlying fairness and strength of the Lloyds system.

This year, 100 names in the Muggins syndicate sadly lost £1 million each.

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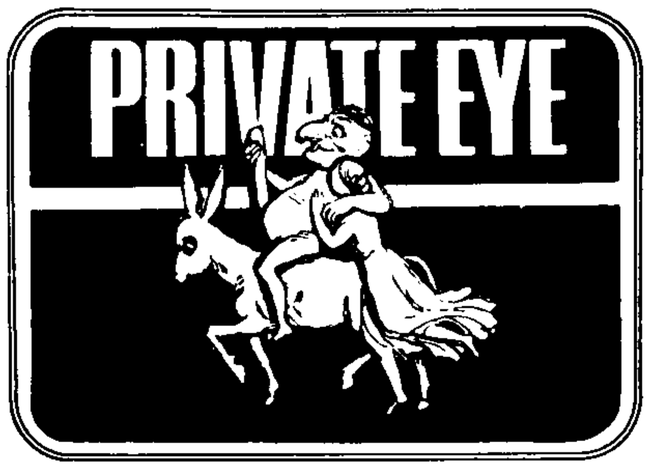


COLOUR SECTION

PRODIGIOUS efforts have been made to keep a famous name out of the Commons trade and industry select committee hearings into what is known as the Supergun Affair but what is really about the degree to which the British arms industry, defence ministry, intelligence services and trade department conspired to provide Saddam Hussein with all the arms he wanted.

The forbidden name is that of Mark Thatcher.

Before he left his home in Bristol to give evidence to the committee, Christopher Cowley, who worked for Dr Gerard Bull, the man who designed the supergun, made it known that he was going to mention the boy Mark in his evidence. He said he was going to describe Mark's journeys to Saudi Arabia where he was accompanied, apparently, by a consultant to the Midland Bank and was engaged in some heavy arms dealing.

When Cowley came to London the night before he was due to give evidence, however, he had a meeting with the chairman of the committee and its officials. The meeting was to "groom" him in the committee's procedure. Some committee members were rather surprised to hear of this preliminary meeting, which was apparently unprecedented. When Cowley gave evidence the next day he made no mention of Mark Thatcher.

The next important witness, however, Mr Gerard James, former chairman of Astra, the British arms company which made the propellant for the supergun, did mention Mark Thatcher by name.

In the middle of his evidence, James blurted out that Thatcher Junior regularly attended weekly meetings of an international arms sales cabal, which met in a Savoy suite hired by the chairman of Lotus cars. James also spoke of the consultant to the Midland Bank, a former SAS man called Kock, who was also on the Astra board and, according to James, boasted of his proximity to the Thatcher family.

All this was greeted by the MPs with much giggling and scoffing, and James was made to look like an upper class twit who was a bit nutty about the intelligence services. The newspapers seemed to share this view: only one, the *Financial Times*, mentioned the reference to Mark.

Some MPs were growing restless, however, and their restlessness was not relieved by the evidence of Mr Kock himself, who said his only knowledge of Mrs Thatcher was that he once hosted a lunch which she attended. Once again, the boy Mark was kept out of the discussion.

Others from Astra are still waiting to give evidence and the scene could shift dramatically if any one of the Savoy clique ever finds himself in front of the committee. For the moment, however, committee members are looking forward to a much greater priority: a freebie to China. If it goes ahead, there is no hope of any further searching questions being asked before the election — and still less any chance that the committee will ever produce a report on the supergun mystery. The matter will simply fall along with the present Parliament.

In Russell Miller's recent long article on Mark Thatcher in the *Sunday Times Magazine*, two points stood out:

- Sir Tim Bell, a Thatcher knight and her favourite ad-man, gave Davies a long refutation of charges against Mark, including some which had never been put. Among these last were "all that rubbish about arms dealing".
- Among the guests at the Dallas lunch hosted by Mark, attended by Mummsy and described by Miller, was Wafiq Said — a well-known Saudi arms dealer.

THE US air strike against Libya is still planned for later this year, but it may well come too late to help the election chances of poor John Major.

Bush's humiliation in the New Hampshire primary has made him even more anxious than usual to "act tough" against the Libyans. His excuse is that the US Justice Department has indicted two Libyan airline officials for the Lockerbie bombing. Even though the families' associations in Britain and the US have strongly opposed any "strike", Bush is determined to provide them with the revenge they do not seek.

One worry haunts these ghoulish plans, however. It is that the two Libyans may mysteriously disappear, suddenly done to death by the bloodthirsty Gadaffi regime which neither wants to hand over two unconvicted men to the vagaries of US or British justice nor wants to suffer hundreds dead in revenge for an unsolved crime.

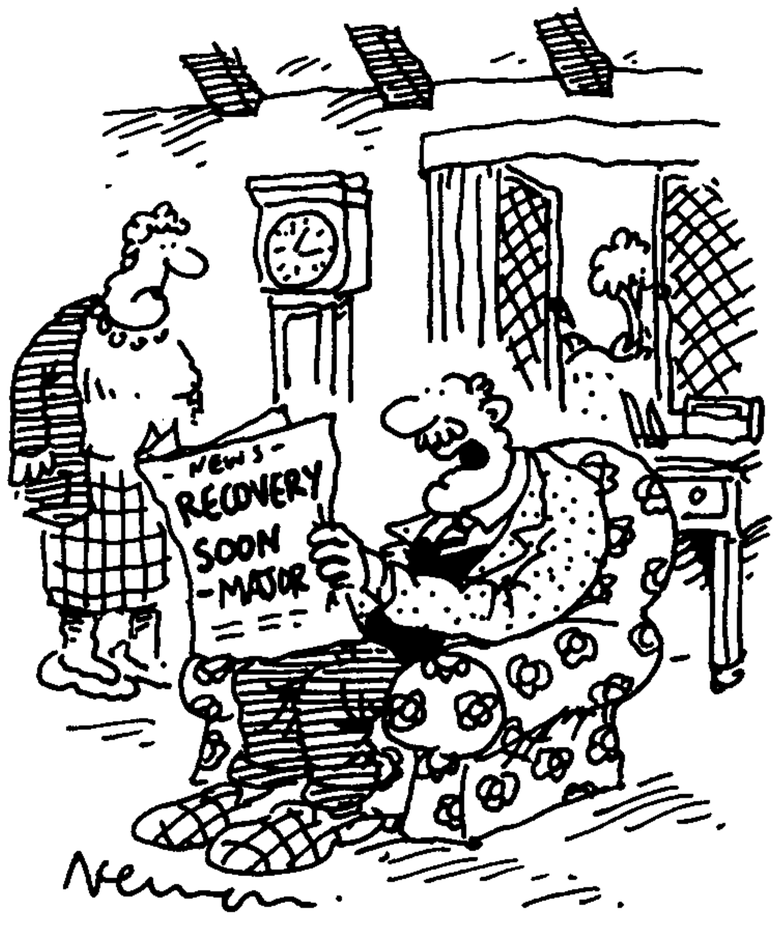
To settle their own stomachs the dirty tricks brigade of the CIA "placed" a story in the once-independent *Washington Post*, announcing that the two men were dead. The story was quickly scotched — the two men have both been photographed in the newspapers — but the report had the desired effect: it flushed the men out and the Libyan government knows their movements will be closely watched from now on.

PS: The Libyan air raid in 1986 was carried out in revenge for a terrorist attack on a Berlin night club which everyone now accepts had nothing to do with Libyans.

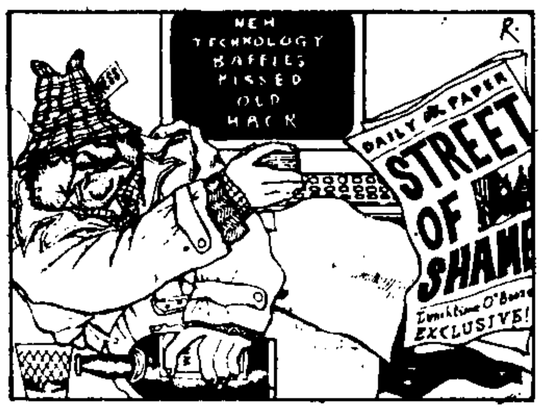
PPS: After almost a decade of litigation, the United States has handed over escaped IRA killer Joe Docherty to its ally, Britain, with whom it has an extradition treaty.

What a good example for the Libyans. They are being threatened with bombing back to civilization if they do not *immediately* extradite two of their citizens to countries with which they do *not* have any treaty.

● *More news 'IN THE BACK' – p. 28.*



"It's the first cloud-cuckoo of spring"



THE anonymous briefers and sources of Ulster had a busy few days providing "background" on the latest army ambush of a Provisional IRA unit.

Initially, the SAS — perhaps because it's easy to spell — got the credit for the operation. But the sources quickly indicated that the mysterious plain clothes soldiers seen by eyewitnesses after the shootings were actually members of the 14th Intelligence Company.

How then to explain the *Daily Mirror*'s remarkable coverage of the incident, complete with quotes from the SAS? "We gave them the chance to live, but they chose to die," a soldier was quoted as saying, as the paper explained that "the IRA terror gang ignored SAS men's warning shout".

Apparently, after reluctantly killing the terrorists, "a helicopter whisked the SAS team off into the darkness"; a surprising claim, given that the SAS wasn't actually there and that locals saw the real undercover soldiers hanging around the area for several hours after the shootings.

Meanwhile Ian Geldard, who edits a bizarre guerilla warfare newsletter in between TV and radio appearances, was prevailed upon by the *Sun* to explain the phenomenon of "Lillywhites burrowing their way into British society" — in particular the late Kevin Barry O'Donnell.

According to Geldard, the new breed of terrorists doesn't "come from known republican families or strongholds". Perhaps the next time Geldard is visiting his sources in Ireland, he might take a glance at the name plaque above Sinn Fein headquarters. Kevin Barry House, named like the deceased Lillywhite after a republican martyr. A bit of a giveaway really.

ANDREW "Brillo Pad" Neill appears to be suffering from paranoid schizophrenia in handling of the big question of Scottish devolution.

Ensconced at Stalag Wapping, the tartan exile is exhorting readers of the *Sunday Times*'s English-only editions to let the independence-minded Scots have their way if they are so stupid. Meanwhile, the rag's Scottish section jingoistically rallies the jocks to the Union flag with a passion that would make John Bull blush.

Curiously this half-baked spleen is penned miles away from Scotland — deep in the safety of rural Hampshire, where Gerry Malone, Brillo's chum, is seeking to resume an unpromising parliamentary career that was rudely interrupted by the Labour ingrates who dumped him from Aberdeen South in 1987. Malone is now prospective Tory candidate for Winchester.

NIGEL Pratt-Dumpster certainly has some illustrious sources for his "stories". Following in the elegant footsteps of Princesses Margaret and Pushy of Kent comes Nigel's latest confidant, gormless Piers Morgan of the *Sun*.

Last month Dumpster flew to Ulster where the newly re-wed Liz Taylor was due to appear at a ludicrous ball held in Belfast city hall. Sadly Liz couldn't make it and Dumpster instead found himself surrounded by major celebs like Queen Anne of Romania and Mr "Kip" Forbes.

Readers of the *Mail on Sunday* were still supplied with an appropriate scoop: Ulster-born actor Liam Neeson was romancing Brooke Shields somewhere in New York, he revealed. All terribly fascinating — but the source of the scoop wasn't the ball. It was Morgan's Bizarre column in the *Sun* some days earlier.

Dumpster again turned to Piers for exclusive inside information (shared with around 11 million others) about Kenneth Branagh. Clearly the strain of his relentless high living is beginning to show. Perhaps Lord Rothermere should do the decent thing and retire Dumpster gracefully, replacing him with his confidant, Piers Moron.

SIMON BERKOWITZ, the Brighton Conservative accused of robbing Paddy Ashdown's solicitors, has been telling anyone who'll listen that he first contacted the *News of the Screws* after spotting the rag's "Scandal" line.

This is the sleazy hotline phone number which *Screws* editor Patsy Chapman uses to entice sneaks, crooks, aggrieved neighbours, vengeful old friends etc, to cash in by snooping or grassing up anyone they have a grudge against.

Usually, judging by the *Screws*' content these days, it attracts yarns about randy milkmen rather than major revelations about the powerful and the wicked. The rag's circulation plummet of half a million in little more than a year suggests readers are unimpressed by Prurient Patsy's yawn-making sagas of sex in the suburbs. Undaunted, last Sunday she filled almost a page of the *Screws* with an earth-shattering exposé of... a pitifully small massage parlour on the Isle of Thanet.

HACKS AT the *Independent* whose pay has been frozen since last year and who are constantly told the company has no cash to spare have been none too amused to learn that the paper's deputy editor, bouffant-haired lothario Matthew Symonds, has just had his salary increased from £77,000 to £100,000.

The reason for this dramatic rise, apparently, was Symonds's belated discovery that he was earning rather less than some of the paper's overpaid columnists, such as Peter Jenkins and Lynn Barber.

PORN CZAR David Sullivan seems hellbent on fulfilling his dream of owning a "proper" newspaper. His secret plan to launch a mid-market Sunday organ this autumn is now well advanced.

But word has it that Sullivan may also bid to take the drooping *Today* off the Dirty Digger's hands and run it as a middlebrow sister paper to his yucksome *Daily Sport*. He even has an editor lined up — the *Sport*'s own Peter Grimsditch, once editor of the *Daily Star* and a former Murdoch executive.

Oddly enough, the Oxbridge-educated Grimsditch is probably intellectually more suited to *Toady* than the present incumbent, the amiable but dim Martin "Bimbo" Dunn. If Sullivan acquired *Toady* he might well switch Dunn to the *Daily Sport*, where the ability to do joined-up writing is not an essential qualification, leaving Grimsditch in charge of both *Today* and the new middle-market Sunday rag.

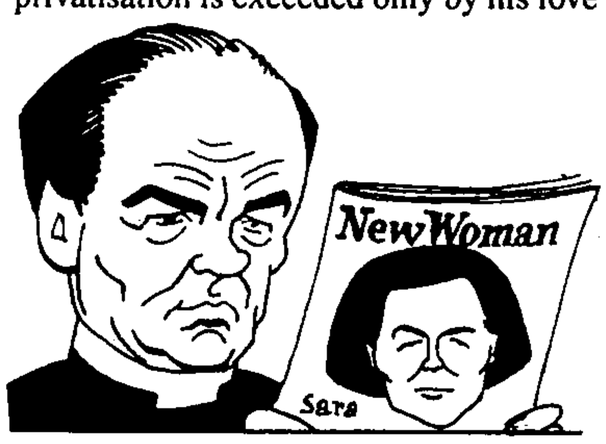
Sullivan and Dunn already have one thing in common. As the *Eye* has pointed out before, both are intimately acquainted with the *Sport*'s libidinous agony aunt, kiss-and-tell queen Fiona Wright.

WRITS ARE flying all over the place at Mirror Group Newspapers as the "Maxwell men" seek to establish their positions in higher management.

Bob Cole, Maxwell's former press officer, has been sacked and is suing Robert Gregory, Maxwell's expert sacker of human beings (which expertise earned him the title: Director of Human Resources). Another angry litigant is systems expert Tony Stalker, brother of the former deputy chief constable of Manchester, and Oxford transport boss Brian Moss.

All these people want to know the details of Mr Gregory's salary. However large this is (and Maxwell was always generous to his henchmen), it surely can't pay for Mr Gregory's two large cars, his flat at the Barbican and his children's school fees. But surely they can't have been put down to the company either.

Even more senior than Gregory is Bernard Tominey, the *Mirror*'s commercial director, who sits on the main board. Tominey's passion for privatisation is exceeded only by his love for football — he is chairman of St Albans Football Club (can Interfax, generous sponsors of St Albans, have anything to do with the firm of the same name which is servicing *Mirror* photocopiers?) Indeed, so dedicated is Mr Tominey to his team that he occasionally goes over the top. In November 1990 he was fined £150 by the Football Association for "insulting behaviour" after a cup game.



Other Maxwell favourites anxious somehow to stay on board at the *Mirror* are Jean Baddeley, head of the dwindling hospitality department, and Helen Liddell, former press officer for the Scottish Labour Party, who is still on the main board.

STRESS-RELATED ailments appear to be reaching epidemic proportions at the *Sunday Express*, where hacks are dropping like flies under the strain of working for the impossible Eve Pollard.

David Emanuel, who has worked for the paper for 25 years, has been off sick since November following a nervous collapse. A hack with similar symptoms, Mark Porter, recently returned from three months' sick leave. Both Roger Wilsher and news editor Rowena Webster are suffering from nervous exhaustion and have been ordered by their doctors to take a rest-cure.

Chief features sub-editor Peter Robinson collapsed in the office last month. David Billington, the production editor, has been away for weeks with continuous nosebleeds. Hackette Oonagh Blackman is still in hospital following an asthma attack, which doctors say was brought on by strain. Another hack, Nick Holdsworth, has developed "muscular spasms", also because of stress at work. Even the northern staff are not immune from the curse of Bollard: David Sharpe, who runs the paper's Manchester office, has been off work with high blood pressure ever since la Bollard's arrival last summer.

Those who aren't hospitalised are fleeing for the hills. A list of hacks who have left the *Sunday Express* during Eve's brief reign includes Jim Murphy, Mike Streeter, Chris Logan, Giles Tremlett, Neville Hodgkinson, Liz Grice, Peter Wilsher, Gil Morgan, Jane Owen, Chris Angeloglou, Sue Peart, plus most of the staff of the *Sunday Express Magazine*.

What with illness and defections, there are only a few hacks left — and most of them are actively looking for work elsewhere. The new features editor, Richard Holledge, may soon be joining the queue at the exit: only days after his arrival, at the beginning of February, he was told that Eve now wanted to give his job to someone from the *Daily Mail*.

Even during la Bollard's increasingly frequent holidays, there is no respite. When she went to the south of France last summer, French-speaking hacks in the office had to spend hours making restaurant bookings for milady while simultaneously trying to write their stories. Last week she edited the paper from a hotel in Barbados, via a poolside fax machine.

Almost the only person flourishing under the Bollard regime is her preposterous sidekick Charles "Experienced" Golding, a bow-tied former barrister who used to work on TV-am's "Wide-Awake Club" and once wrote a book claiming that London was being over-run by killer rats.

Last Saturday, Golding startled *Express* hacks by insisting that, for legal reasons, the paper couldn't carry anything about the Stephanie Slater case. "I'm a trained lawyer," he said. "I know about these things." It was only after an appeal by the *Sunday Express*'s real lawyer, who pointed out that every other paper would be full of the story, that the bow-tied nincompoop relented.

IN OUR ISSUE of 8 November 1991 we stated that the Middle East editor of the *Independent*, Patrick Cockburn, Robert Fisk, the *Independent*'s Middle East correspondent, and Michael Sheridan, the *Independent*'s Israel correspondent, when covering the Middle East peace conference in Madrid discovered "to their horror" that they had been booked into the same hotel and immediately and at great expense to the *Independent* left their hotel and hired extra rooms in three separate hotels.

We now accept that no such incident occurred. We apologise for the inaccuracies contained in this report and for any embarrassment caused.

IT NOW looks certain that Malcolm Rifkind will become yet another corpse (cf David Howell, John Moore, Cecil Parkinson) in the politicians' graveyard, the department of transport.

Riffraff's credibility has been destroyed by the "postponement" on the prime minister's orders of his much-vaunted white paper on rail privatisation. What cooked Riffraff's goose was the results of a private poll by Conservative central office which revealed that 80 percent of Tory voters opposed the publication of rail privatisation proposals before the election.

If the Tories win, Riffraff will no longer matter and commonsense will have another chance to prevail. It will become crystal clear that his plan to sell off InterCity to the highest bidder, on any terms that will make sense to the Treasury (let alone rail users), is unattainable. And it will also become clear that alternatives that treat the railways as on a par with airspace — ie they envisage renting out "slots" to competing train operators — are as fatuous as the Government's expensive consultants have already discovered.

MEANWHILE Philip Wood, under secretary at the transport department, continues to serve his *real* masters: not the politicians, of course, but Whitehall's juggernaut-friendly transport mandarins.

The sympathy expressed in *Eye* 786 for his inability to provide the Tories with an acceptable privatisation formula for BR caused much hilarity at the DoT's crumbling Marsham Street HQ. For politicians come and go, and the key to Wood's rapid rise in the bureaucracy has been his ability to please his *officials*. His rise was kick-started by the key part he played in introducing heavier lorries on to British roads. This was — and indeed still is — a long-standing ambition of the lorry-loving civil servants who frequently discuss the topic over "working lunches" as guests of the road hauliers.

The plan was jeopardised back in 1978 by the leak of an internal DoT memorandum suggesting the setting up of a "rigged" inquiry, and the ensuing outcry put the matter on ice. But the juggernaut-lovers returned to the attack after the 1979 election. The then transport secretary Norman Fowler was bulldozed into appointing the ailing Sir Arthur Armitage to look into into "lorries, people and the environment".

Armitage's terms of reference carefully did not mention lorry weights, but Wood's appointment as secretary to the inquiry took care of that and he served his official masters well: Armitage recommended a rise of more than one third in maximum weights, from 32 to 44 tonnes.

Fowler, who had been assured by officials that Armitage was likely to suggest 38 tonnes, was horrified. But ministerial disapproval did not prevent Wood's immediate promotion. This taught Wood a valuable lesson about who rules the roost in Whitehall.

Today he is unmoved by Rifkind's irritated dissatisfaction with his seven railway privatisation schemes. His only concern must be to produce a plan to satisfy his permanent secretary, Patrick Brown. That means a scheme that once and for all dumps what the DoT traditionally sees as the "railway problem" into the lap of the private sector.

HOME SECRETARY Kenneth Baker knows a thing or two about escapes, having wriggled out of countless calls for his resignation. But it now emerges that last year's spectacular Special Branch-inspired IRA breakout from Brixton jail was merely the icing on the cake — inmates have been leaving Baker's prisons in droves.

Figures recently released in the Commons reveal startling productivity growth among lags with hacksaws. In the 12 months up to 1 November 1989 there were 169 prison escapes in the UK; in the year to 1 November 1990 there were 185 — and in the year up to 1 November 1991 there were a staggering 316.

Baker's prison regime would appear to be as secure as it is popular.

THE MULTIPLE joys of representing Basingstoke are plainly not enough for Andrew Hunter MP, whose taste for the exotic leads him into some questionable alliances.

Like several of his parliamentary colleagues, Hunter's "long-standing interest in Southern African affairs" has led to a good deal of junketing in places which ought to be off-limits, the "independent" homeland of Bophutatswana for example. But this time he has gone one better. Hunter is now the first MP to have visited territory held by the Renamo rebel movement in Mozambique.

Renamo, initially the creation of Ian Smith's security forces and later armed to the teeth by South Africa, have long been considered well beyond the pale by the Foreign Office, the general consensus being that they are a particularly nasty version of the Contras. Aid agencies, refugees and even the US state department have produced reams of evidence documenting Renamo atrocities, but none of this has deterred the plucky Hunter, who trekked off to meet the rebels in January on a trip organised by the Mozambique Institute, set up last year in Bedford Square to fly the flag for Renamo and run by former Federation of Conservative Students (FCS) guru, David Hoile.

Hunter, a former Harrow schoolmaster, pronounced himself jolly pleased with what he had seen. He and Hoile have since repaid Renamo's hospitality, welcoming the movement's second-in-command, Raul Domingos, and information chief, Vicente Ululu, to the House of Commons. Both gentlemen were presented to the press at Westminster on 18 February, but struggled to impress, although Domingos's sun-glasses were much admired.

Hunter's early departure did not improve a slightly tetchy atmosphere, but Hoile was always willing to chip in on behalf of his guests. Replying to hints that Renamo fell short of the image of freedom-loving John Stuart Mill-readers suggested by Mr Domingos, Hoile claimed: "I've been to Tory conferences and Renamo congresses and I can tell you Renamo is a whole lot more democratic."

The Foreign Office did not appear particularly excited by Renamo's arrival, but right-wing Tories are rallying to the cause. George Gardiner MP has already signed up for the Mozambique Institute's advisory council, joining Norman Stone, Roger Scruton, Bruce Anderson and the Marquess of Londonderry.

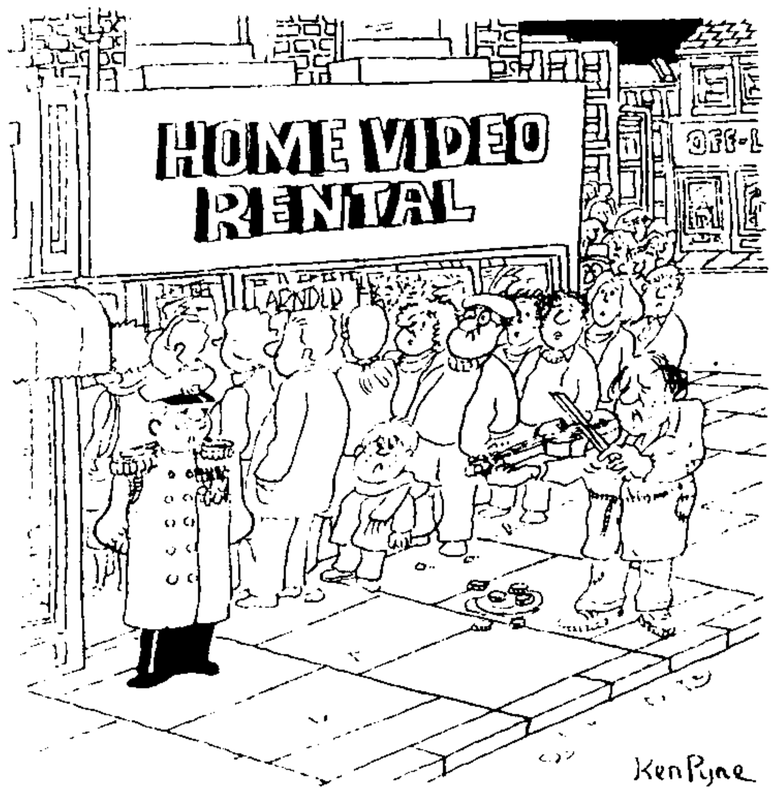
SUPER-HACK Dennis MacShane's subtle attempts to win the Labour Party's nomination for Dave Nellist's Coventry East seat has been tragically curtailed.

Eye readers will recall that globe-trotting MacShane, ex-NUJ president and now the Geneva-based assistant general-secretary of the International Metalworkers' Federation, has offered a year's salary to anyone who could prove he had been in contact with the party's Walworth Road HQ since Nellist was expelled.

But although MacShane's local reputation has soared since publication of his book exposing the official whitewash over the death of a Coventry soldier from "friendly fire" during the Gulf War, his own campaign has now backfired. He has failed to be shortlisted for the seat (Labour majority: 6,653) despite winning the second highest number of nominations from affiliated branches.

Although MacShane can take comfort from the fact that the candidate with the most nominations, local T&G boss Bill Lapworth, was also struck off, it now looks as if nominations have gone to those candidates *least* likely to beat the newly-independent Nellist at the polls.

This rag-bag of aspiring hacks includes Coventry city council leader Jim Cunningham, two dull ex-MPs, Dr Oonagh MacDonald and Geoff Edge, as well as white-collar APEX union baronette Joan McCoy. Now watch Coventry East Labour Party's sizeable non-expelled militant lobby push for the weakest candidate and give Nellist the best chance of victory.



THE dictatorial streak that lurks just beneath the surface in the Labour Party is coming to the fore as Walworth Road, the people's HQ, scents possible victory on the path to Downing Street.

Nowhere has this been truer than in the "star chamber" trials of prospective Labour candidates, headed by Roy Hattersley.

As the *Eye* predicted three months ago (*Eye* 781), Lol Duffy will not be allowed to challenge Lynda Chalker for a second time in Wallasey, despite having slashed her majority from more than 6,000 to just 279 in 1987.

"Lefty Lol" is seen as a duffer because he espouses untrendy ideas like unilateralism.

However, if Labour's Wallasey branch returns more than 50 percent blank ballot papers in protest, the selection process will be invalid. This tactic is bad news for Mike Groves, former singer in the twee Spinners folk group. Duffy secured 24 out of 33 nominations, and Groves only one. But at least Groves is local and sees himself as having a chance of picking up some of Duffer's support. If the selection process *is* nullified, Fattersley and Co will, in true democratic style, impose a candidate.

The Walworth Roaders have already selected their favourite: Angela Eagle is a COHSE lobbyist who represents the type of candidate Walworth Road wants nowadays and the message to the constituencies is clear: piss off.

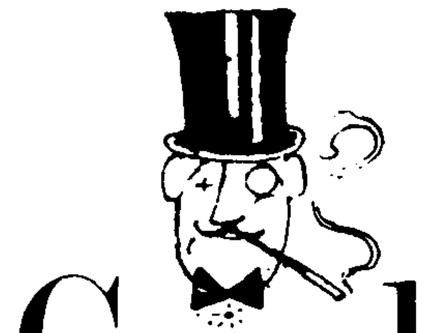
Fattersley also decided who was to stand against Terry Fields in Broadgreen. Alan Dean, Liverpool city council leader Harry Rimmer's number two, had sent a fax to say that he couldn't attend, but it somehow got lost. Never mind! The *apparatchiks* said it was irrelevant because they would have proceeded whatever his excuse. One couldn't, after all, have a Liverpool councillor fighting a parliamentary seat unless one wanted to invite disaster. The appointed choice was Jane Kennedy — another trade union official — and Labour seems set to go down in both constituencies.

LABOUR has finally twigged that drastic changes are needed in its economic policy if the party is to have any hope of winning a working majority and then be able to deal with the full-blown slump.

The results of a fundamental reappraisal ordered by Neil Kinnock will be published before the Budget. If Labour does secure a working majority, one plan is for Britain to leave the European exchange rate mechanism and allow the pound to float (as it did before Major's disastrous decision to tie it to the German mark in 1990), thus enabling interest rates to fall to about half their present level.

The question is, will Labour be able to face the embarrassing back-pedalling that this would entail? Likewise, the plans for increased taxation, especially the higher national insurance contributions which will bear so heavily on voters only just above the national pay average. Can they be abandoned? The increases in higher rate income tax are anyway due to be postponed until after the economy recovers, and will affect only the top two million taxpayers.

'Backbiter'



Grovel

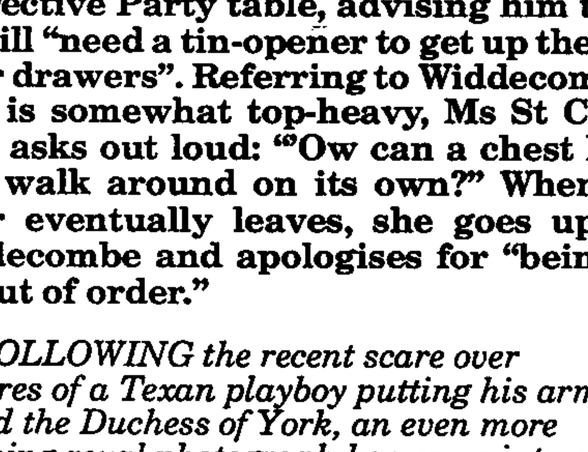
I WITNESS embarrassing scenes in the Pugin Room bar of the House of Lords, which is more popular with Labour MPs than with the scions of noble houses.

Miss Whiplash Lindi St. Clair, leader of the Corrective Party, and two of her acolytes are there enjoying a drink with Tony Banks, the Labour MP for Newham North West. Also present, elsewhere in the room, are Tory MPs Ann Widdecombe and David Amess, both avowed Christians and both opponents of abortion, while seated at other tables were Labour MPs Paul Boateng, Red Ken Leninspart and their guests.

Banks's party is in particularly high spirits and Ms St Clair gives some displays of her excoriating wit. She tells an awkward Boateng that she is "partial to black men"; then, addressing Amess, invites him to come over and join the Corrective Party table, advising him that he will "need a tin-opener to get up the leg of 'er drawers". Referring to Widdecombe, who is somewhat top-heavy, Ms St Clair then asks out loud: "'Ow can a chest like that walk around on its own?" When St Clair eventually leaves, she goes up to Widdecombe and apologises for "being a bit out of order."

● *FOLLOWING the recent scare over pictures of a Texan playboy putting his arm round the Duchess of York, an even more shocking royal photograph has come into my hands. Dating from a year or two ago, it shows our gracious sovereign Queen Brenda, no less, having her back massaged by a notorious fraudster and sexmaniac.*

I can only hope that, like Fergie and her Texan, the Queen and Cap'n Bob (for it is he) were "just good friends".



FLEEING the phoney election campaign in Britain, I witness the even phonier politics of the New Hampshire hustings, where American presidential barracking is at its usual high level of solemnity and substance.

At one of his few speaking engagements, George Bush complains about all the sniping, "negative" campaigning around him — and then promptly stands back to let Arnold Schwarzenegger speak.

The misshapen pin-up son of an Austrian "moderate" is almost as articulate as George himself, and makes a fine impression by referring to "those girlie-men over in the Democrats". As they say in showbusiness, that's politics.

Pseuds Corner

Thursday is spent recovering. I am always completely drained after writing. The emotional exhaustion is something the same as you might experience after the death of a friend or a huge tear-stained row with your spouse. Luckily there is photocopying, posting and the telephoning of agents to keep a semblance of physical activity. There is also lunch with some neighbours, who have made a lamb curry to prepare me for the coming trip to India. It is a great relief to be talking French for the afternoon, by doing which I can cut off the introspective, English-speaking part of my brain which is still raw from last night's writing.

FRANK RONAN
Weekend Guardian

Tomorrow, in a book called *The Oxford Companion to the Mind*, I will read an essay entitled "Chinese Evidence on the Evolution of Language" so I can learn about the use of pictograms. Tomorrow I will shout at planes and jets that come at us like arrows. Tomorrow I will find *the* picture with *the* diagram inside *the* book that tells me finally and simply and beyond a doubt the way religion tells some people, *This tiny thing of beauty in the tree outside your window is a chaffinch, Marianne.*

MARIANNE WIGGINS
The Times

David Hare's Racing Demon was obviously a turning point: the first time we had seen on stage the Church dissected as an institution. Hare told me [Michael Billington] recently that it was blindingly obvious he was using the C of E as a metaphor for the Labour Party.

Guardian

I was bidden to the Chows' apartment above their Upper East Side restaurant in 1987 to discuss the finer points of a portrait sitting with Robert Mapplethorpe.

Lint-white, her hair Eton-cropped by a Chinatown barber, Tina was unbearably beautiful. She seemed more fragile than ever, lost in the vast, glacial perfection of the place with its museum-quality furniture and objects by the Art Deco masters.

As she uncoiled her Fortuny robes from their swaddling of acid-free tissue paper, there was a thunderous explosion. A huge alabaster wall light that Lagerfeld had given her had sprung from its fitting and smashed to shards an antique stone Chinese pillow beneath it.

This was the first serious work of art that Tina had ever acquired for herself. However, she remained disquietingly serene, moved to the middle of the room, announced that she would release a primal scream, did so, and then continued her whisper-soft conversational flow as if nothing had happened. It was a superb gesture.

HAMISH BOWLES
Telegraph

CONTRIBUTORS: Stan Barstow, Claire Duffett, Steven Berkoff, E. Strobes.

£10 paid for entries

MY OLD FRIEND Taki Theodoracopolous is beginning to lose his faculties now he has come into his father's money.

In a recent "London Diary" for *The New York Observer*, he offered some pearls of "gossip" about Mickey Suffolk, "England's premier earl", claiming that Suffolk was no longer on speaking terms with Princess Michael of Kent.

Six months ago, according to Taki, *Private Eye* published a story claiming that Suffolk had had a "leg-over" with Princess Michael. "The Princess rang him," wrote the Greek glue-sniffer, "and asked him to sue as she — being royal — could not. The earl obliged, *Private Eye* settled out of court and the princess got an apology. Suffolk collected £30,000 and promptly bought himself a new Mercedes. When Princess Michael demanded half the loot, Suffolk played dumb."

Unfortunately, Taki is wildly misinformed. *Private Eye* never published any such story (and therefore did not pay out £30,000 or publish an apology), and anyway there is nothing to prevent a member of the royal family, especially such a lesser member, from suing for libel.

Indeed, Princess Michael may care to consider whether it is defamatory for Taki to suggest that she "demanded half the loot" from Mickey Suffolk.

MY ARCHITECTURAL colleague Piloti (see last *Eye*) may fear for the future of English Heritage once Jocelyn "Piranha Teeth" Stevens moves over from the Royal College of Art to take its helm, but his fears are but dust compared to the panic sweeping the college over Stevens' possible replacement as rector.

Among the four shortlisted candidates are two with minimum academic qualifications for the post — failed Habitat tycoon Sir Terence Conran and Lady "selling cemeteries by the pound" Porter, erstwhile leader of Westminster city council.

College staff find it hard to believe that the consideration of two such avowed free-marketeers can foreshadow anything but a drastic cut in public funding.

ANDREW "Brillo Pad" Neill's assertion in a magazine interview last week that he only took up with Pamela Bordes for fear that he would be thought homosexual if he didn't, is most puzzling. By the same argument, he should presumably have made a pass at the gorgeous pouting Caroline Michel during the year in which she was his constant escort. Yet I understand he never once laid a finger on her. How gallant.

● *MY PHOTOGRAPH, courtesy of the Press Association, has an interesting caption on the back of it: "Actress Gayle Hunnicut and an unidentified man arrive at the Royal Opera House London" to attend a performance of Don Giovanni. The unidentified man, of course, is her husband Simon Jenkins, who edits The Times.*

Pip Pip!

NOOKS and CORNERS

A REPORT recently published by English Heritage, *Buildings at Risk: A Sample Survey,* **reveals that 7.3 percent of England's listed buildings are "at risk from neglect" while a further 14.6 percent are vulnerable.**

Many of these, of course, are derelict because they have no practical use; and some because their owners cannot afford to maintain them — during a recession this problem is all the more common. But, as the report states: "Owners of listed buildings should accept responsibility to keep their properties in adequate repair, and it cannot be assumed that they either need, or should receive, financial assistance to meet this responsibility. Indeed, it is often not so much grant as the statutory enforcement powers vested in local authorities which are required to unlock difficult cases of neglect."

Quite so. The trouble is that most local authorities are frightened to use the powers they possess to protect listed buildings. If a repairs notice is served and the owner ignores it, the local authority can make the necessary repairs itself and send the bill to the owner — but the bill may remain unpaid. Worse, if a full repairs notice is followed by a compulsory purchase order, the authority may find it has an expensive wreck on its hands.

But that need not, and should not, be an excuse for inaction. While there are countless examples of fine buildings rotting owing to the culpable indifference of local councillors, there are some examples of responsible action by local authorities which deserve applause.

In Hanley, Staffordshire, the redundant "Cathedral of the Potteries" — the Bethesda Chapel of 1819 and 1859 — was bought by Keyland Estates Ltd of Jersey from the Methodist Commissioners in 1988 and then left to rot.

IN FOR REPAIRS: Sheldon Hall, Birmingham — once a moated manor house of 1618; today a wreck owned and neglected by Stepace Ltd of London. A repair notice has been served on Stepace, but to no avail. Will Birmingham city council take the tough action necessary to save this charming building? Watch this space.

Naturally, the building was vandalised and many of its fittings stolen, and it was only a matter of time before the building collapsed to leave a cleared site for development. But, in the last year, Stoke-on-Trent city council has twice entered the building to make emergency repairs and is sending a £17,000 bill off to the Channel Islands. Well done.

One of the worst cases of neglect in Britain is that of The Crescent in Buxton, Derbyshire. This spectacular example of Georgian urban design was designed by John Carr of York and built in the 1780s. Its great stone curve of fluted Doric pilasters is the glory of the spa town — but at present, it is boarded up and rotting. The St Ann's Hotel, which occupied the western wing of The Crescent since the beginning, was acquired by Crown Hotels, who shut it down four years ago and left it to decay. High Peak borough council twice served repair notices, then carried out the work itself — including emergency repairs to the roof — and sent the bill to the anti-social proprietors. But the prospect of carrying out millions of pounds worth of repairs has deterred the council from serving a full repairs notice and following it up with a CPO.

This sad story may have a happy ending, for the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust hopes to take on the building. But there remains the problem of the rest of The Crescent. Until last July, this was occupied by Derbyshire county council and the magnificent Assembly Room was used as a reference library. Then the council's engineers detected movement and declared the building unsafe. Now the council claims it cannot afford repairs and has put the building up for sale and, despite the efforts being made to preserve the rest of The Crescent, the greedy Conservative councillors are holding out for the highest commercial price. I should love to see High Peak borough council serve a repairs notice on Derbyshire county council.

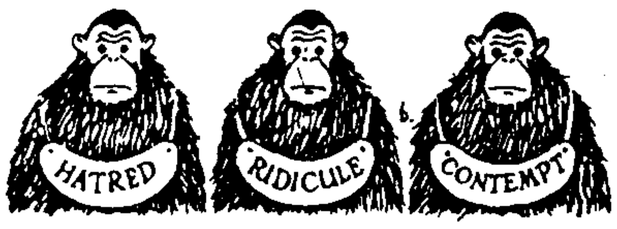
Someone else who ought to receive a repairs notice is the ineffable Archdeacon Hayward of London. This incorrigible cleric has frequently figured in this column because of his policy of disposing of the assets of the diocese of London at the highest commercial price, regardless of pastoral, social, historical or aesthetic considerations.

A long-running scandal is that of St Luke's, Old Street, viciously un-roofed by the church in 1959 and left to rot. A few years back, Archdeacon Hayward scuppered a scheme to build student accommodation inside the shell by favouring a development proposal by the Worshipful Company of Fan-Makers to replace one side of the noble ruin by a wall of mirror glass. Happily this gratuitously vandalistic scheme has foundered and the noble ruin of St Luke's is now subject to a dangerous structure notice.

Two weeks ago two Liberal Democrat councillors in the People's Republic of Islington proposed a motion that if a "partnership scheme" to secure the full restoration of St Luke's were not established, the council should "pursue the issuance of an enforcement and/or prosecution against the London Diocesan Board and/or the Commissioners of the Church of England" and I am happy to report that, despite a desperate fax from the diocesan registrar to the ruling Labour mafia, this motion was carried.

I look forward to action being taken against the diocese. Not before time.

'Piloti'



LIBEL NEWS

A HIGH COURT libel jury is soon to be treated to the spectacle of Stark vs Lewis and Telegraph Newspapers. The plaintiff is Graham Stark, an actor who two years ago wrote a book called *Remembering Peter Sellers*; **the defendant is Roger Lewis, a former Oxford don who is writing a biography of Sellers; and the case centres on whether Stark was once the victim of a practical joke.**

Lewis made the allegation in his review of *Remembering Peter Sellers* for the *Sunday Telegraph* in July 1990, and immediately received a letter from Stark's solicitor, Peter Carter-Ruck.

"It is *untrue*," he said, "that Peter Sellers and/or Blake Edwards talked to our client excitedly of a new penis-enlarging ointment — and went to enormous trouble organising a mail-order address in Copenhagen where a confederate sent Stark a tub of rancid garlic butter."

This allegation has already run up five-figure legal bills in pre-trial hearings. Two weeks ago, Stark's lawyers applied to the high court for an order entitling him to obtain *all* notes, interviews, doodles, etc, that Lewis has accumulated while researching his biography. The high court refused.

It should prove an entertaining trial.

YUSUF ISLAM, formerly pop star Cat Stevens, is suing a Mr Tahrir Khalil for slander and has threatened slander writs against other fellow Muslims, including two senior officials of the Islamic Party of Britain, David Pidcock and Sahib Bleher.

Islam alleges that Khalil "falsely and maliciously spoke" of him and his official positions within Muslim charities, suggesting that he was an Israeli agent working for Mossad. Yusuf Islam is part-Jewish (his mother having been from a family of German Jews who emigrated to Sweden) and his brother David used to reside in Tel Aviv.

This is not Islam's first foray into the courts over an alleged defamation. He encouraged his Moroccan driver and bodyguard to sue Dr Hesham El-Essawy for libel over the contents of a leaflet distributed at the London Central Mosque. Dr El-Essawy denied any involvement with the leaflet and the driver lost the case.

Yusuf Islam's litigation is being handled by an obscure firm of solicitors in Ealing called J. R. Jones. What is curious about all this is that Islam has written that "we are enjoined as Muslims... to avoid going to non-Muslim courts."

At first, Islam seemed reluctant to sue Khalil, stating that he "did not take this matter up in an English court... because that was not Islamic to do so. We simply asked him to stop this or else he would be dealt with personally." This sounded ominously close to declaring a *fatwah* against his enemy, but Islam has now decided to seek redress through the courts after all, though perhaps he should desist altogether, Sahib Bleher has argued, on the grounds that he should consider "himself a humble servant of God and His people, "not fearing any verbal injury on its account" as the Koran puts it.

AVARICIOUS libel solicitor Peter Carter-Fuck, who boasted in his memoirs that he had only ever had one dissatisfied client, will have to revise that figure.

Mrs Bianca Gordon has written to complain to Carter-Fuck, whose firm has applied to come off the record in relation to a libel and slander case on her behalf. The reason for Carter-Fuck's withdrawal is that his firm's costs must be met before they venture further. Carter-Fuck took on Mrs Gordon's case in 1987. "You have at all times considered the case legitimate and serious, and one in which you repeatedly offered your personal involvement... It is the view of all who have followed this case that, by no stretch of the imagination, should this case have been conducted within a firm of libel specialists, in the manner it was for most of the time, by three articled clerks... Surely you must take responsibility for ignoring our consistent predictions that, as a result of your lack of action, the other side would turn the tables. This has, indeed, happened and has resulted in two miscarriages of justice. There is no way in which you can now abandon this case with honour, or any degree of professionalism."

Meanwhile, Carter-Fuck recently wrote a leader-page article in the *Daily Mail* on the inconsistencies in criminal sentencing. Referring to a man who had embezzled £500,000, Carter-Fuck described this amount as "more than most of us earn in a lifetime". This may be true, but it is not true of the 78-year-old Carter-Fuck, who has earned considerably in excess of this sum in *his* lifetime — through ensuring, above all else, that his firm's costs are met.

EYE TV

Dream On

(Channel 4)

THERE are two prevailing opinions on sex on television: either there's far too much of it, or there's not nearly enough. Critics, and most of the people who write angry letters to critics, complain endlessly about such dramas as *A Time To Dance* and *The Men's Room*, but millions tune in anyway, drawn by the prospect of seeing unclad bottoms, rhythmic pumping, sundry expressions of simulated ecstasy — and even, if you're very lucky, the odd willy not hidden behind conveniently placed cushions. Such are the simple pleasures of modern viewing.

The joyous irony of all this is that while the debate rages senselessly on, possibly the rumpiest series yet seen on British television is being happily transmitted week after week without any complaints at all.

Dream On is an American sitcom, co-produced by the film director John Landis, about a thirtysomething man, Martin Tupper, who appears to have been deposited in front of a television at birth, and left there for about 20 years. As a result, his mind teems with images from dismal fifties melodramas, snippets of which are thus used as counterpoint and commentary to the main action. And main action there is a great deal of.

Dream On is made for the US cable channel Home Box Office, so there are few of the same restrictions that dog the established networks. No one minds too much if you say "fuck" three or four times an episode, or if girls happen to reveal their ample embonpoints. And the sexual act itself is far from out of the question.

It should be pointed out at this stage that the word "tup" is a colloquial British term for an uncastrated male sheep or, alternatively, for the head of a piledriver or steamhammer. And the verb "to tup" means to mate with a ewe (if you are a ram), or to cause a ram to mate with a ewe. For Martin Tupper, though a sympathetic, amiable and unassuming chap, has an emotional life of extraordinary complexity.

Divorced by his wife at the beginning of the first series, he has since been involved with an extraordinary array of astonishingly beautiful women. He has had affairs with at least two colleagues at work, his ex-wife (before she remarried), an actress playing his ex-wife in a film, a woman he met in the launderette, a woman who wanted her book published (he's a publisher), a handful of childhood friends and, a few weeks ago, an ex-girlfriend who had walked out the door 15 years ago to buy cigarettes and never came back.

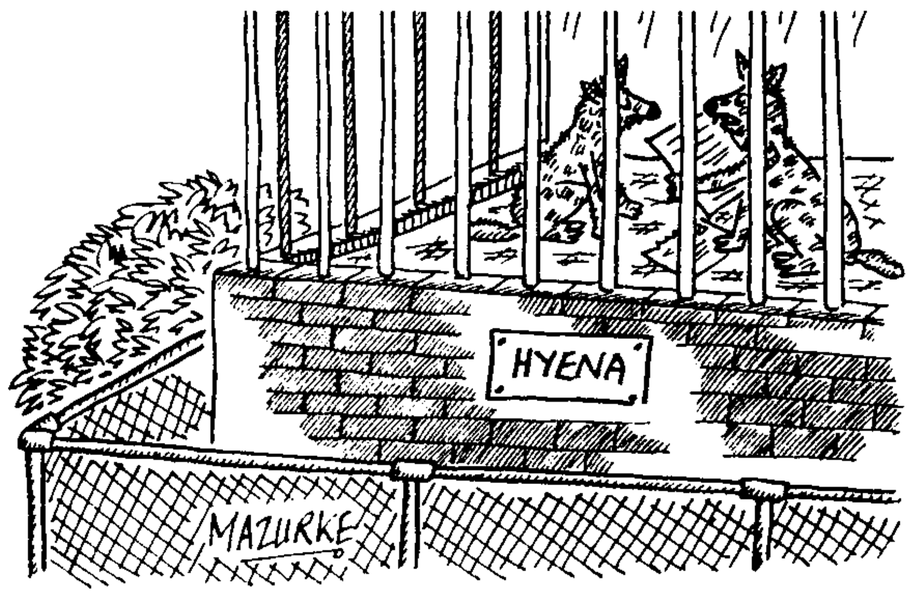
A fortnight ago, he embarked on a relationship with a woman who, it turned out, had been involved in porno movies in her youth. Channel 4's continuity announcers regularly preface the show with the phrase "adult humour", but even this was too much for them. "Some may find the strong language and sexual activity excessive," they warned, something they usually only say if you're going to see something involving live farm animals.

All of this would probably be intolerable if the show weren't consistently and sometimes hilariously funny. The black and white clips — gleaned from more than 800 hours of terrible melodramas made by MCA Television in the fifties — underpin the action cleverly, and very occasionally (as last week) Tupper actually keeps his trousers on.

In America the series has become something of a cult, attracting such notable guest stars as Tom Berenger and David Bowie, and with only 13 episodes a series, instead of the more normal 24 or 26, quality control is abnormally strict. Perhaps it's this simple excellence that has saved the show from controversy over here, but good luck seems a likelier explanation.

Smut haters can tune in this Friday to see what the fuss isn't about, but they have probably missed the boat: it's the last episode of the current series.

'Couch Potato'



"We've been invited to the recording of a television sitcom"

MEDIA NEWS

THE *Sun*'s pitiful puffs for its satellite TV offshoot, Sky, are growing increasingly desperate.

Plugs that were once a sad joke ("Tragic gran Dotty Sprules, 99, was watching Sky TV when she was mauled to death by Kelvin, her grandson's pet hamster" etc) have given way to pernicious lies.

At the beginning of February the Murdoch house rag claimed: "Cartoon comic hero Bart Simpson is giving Del Boy and Cilla Black a belting in TV ratings. The Simpsons is the top show on Sky TV with at least one million viewers a week. That means dish owners watch it more than ITV's *Blind Date* and BBC's *Only Fools and Horses*..."

With a paltry one million viewers, Bart may well be Sky's best shot. But with Del Boy and Cilla notching up more than 24 million viewers between them, according to the Barb ratings, the paper is as usual talking out of that orifice where the *Sun* don't shine.

JUST WHAT sort of person is the Dirty Digger employing to run his flagging Sky satellite operation?

A clue is provided by the fact that one of his trusted lieutenants, Gordon French, has just been sentenced to four months in a maximum security prison after being discovered driving in an extremely emotional state (and not for the first time) by the local constabulary.

So predictable has French's behaviour become that when he attended the recent British Comedy Awards, the Digger sent along another Sky exec, Vincent O'Brien, to keep an eye on him. Alas, the plan came unstuck. Both French *and* O'Brien became so overwhelmed at the lavish scale of LWT's hospitality that security guards had to escort the pair off the premises.

NO ONE IS looking forward to next week's edition of *World in Action* more keenly than Owen Oyston, the peculiar Lancashire tycoon who is one of Neil Kinnock's dearest friends.

He has been telling colleagues that he hopes to use the programme — which is about Conservative "dirty tricks" — as a springboard for a lawsuit against Peter Blaker MP and other leading Tories who encouraged a private investigator to dig for dirt on Oyston (see recent *Eyes passim*).

The investigator, a former fish and chip purveyor called Michael Murrin, later changed sides and handed Oyston numerous tape recordings of his conversations with Blaker, Robert Atkins MP and others. Granada TV has been given yet more tapes by Murrin for its *World in Action* programme.

Given the weight of evidence, it may be wondered why Oyston hasn't begun legal action against his Tory persecutors already. The answer is simple: if a lawsuit were pending, he thought Granada's lawyers might drop the programme for fear of contempt of court. Better to wait for the transmission (which is expected to be sympathetic to Oyston) and then unleash a volley of writs against Blaker, Atkins *et al* immediately afterwards — just in time, by a pleasing coincidence, for the general election.

CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
LIFTS
JIM MOIR HEAD OF LIGHT ENT.
TARDY
"WE'VE GOT A NEW RIP OFF HOME VIDEO SHOW CALLED 'CAUGHT IN THE ACT'
"CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF WHAT?"
THE ROVERS RETURN
CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF MAKING JEREMY BEADLE LOOK GOOD!"
BAR
"Trebles & the bottom of the barrel all round!"
SHAME SHAME
Ken Pyne

PRINCESS MICHAEL AWARD

ON 1 FEBRUARY *The Times* published a long piece by that Renaissance man Julian Critchley MP about the places that inspired the poems of A.E. Housman.

"Ludlow is the undisputed capital, aesthetic and geographical, of *A Shropshire Lad*," Critchley observed. "Indeed, Ludlow is still the market town that A.E. Housman would recognise today. His ashes are buried in the north wall of the parish church of St Laurence's, under the shadow of Ludlow Tower."

This rang a bell with members of the Ludlow branch of the Housman Society. Last year they published a pamphlet about the places that inspired Housman. "Ludlow is the undisputed capital, aesthetic and geographical, of *A Shropshire Lad*," it noted. "Indeed, Ludlow is still the market town that A.E. Housman would recognise today. Housman's ashes are buried..." And so on. More than half Critchley's 1300-word article was simply lifted verbatim — and without acknowledgement — from the society's leaflet.

Cheekiest of all was Critchley's claim that, for anyone wishing to follow Housman's trail, "my detailed directions will help you get the fullest enjoyment". His detailed directions — "after a right-angled bend in the road, pass the Saxon church in the village of Diddlebury" etc etc — were identical, word-for-word, to the Housman Society's.

Critchley's brazen plagiarism was raised at a meeting of South Shropshire district council in Ludlow last week. Still, no doubt the voters of Aldershot, his constituency, will reaffirm their belief in his integrity at the forthcoming election.

Sally Deedes

THINKING of banking with NatWest? This "heads they win, tails you lose" story may make you think again.

Towards the end of January, ASAP Computer Services paid a cheque for £1,432.33 into its account by post. The amount was enough to bring the account well into credit, although the firm had an arranged overdraft facility of £750. In the same post, the company sent four payment cheques to its suppliers, the total of which would still have left the account well within its limit.

When ASAP Computer Services received its next statement, it showed a debit of £110 and that four cheques had been dishonoured with instructions that they should be represented. One cheque was for the grand sum of £4.57.

NatWest told the firm that as the cheque crediting the account takes three days to clear, there were insufficient funds to meet the cheques which the firm had written. But surely, ASAP countered, it also takes three days for the cheques they had written to be cleared by their suppliers, and in that time the credit cheque to their account would have been cleared?

The bank then claimed that the cheques ASAP had written must have been presented a day before the cheque in the firm's favour had arrived. Not so, the firm pointed out. The cheques to suppliers had been sent on a Saturday and the cheque in its favour had been received by the bank's own admission on the following Monday.

Perhaps, suggested the bank clerk, "the banks were instructed to arrange for special clearance... for all four cheques."

One is left with the intriguing vision of a supplier arranging for special clearance of a cheque for £4.56 and a transfer in favour of the National Westminster Bank at the firm's expense of £110.

The only change England would propose might be to replace Derek Pringle, who remains troubled by no-balls,

The Times

HACK WATCH No 16: Roy Hattersley

IN HIS SPEECH at the *What The Papers Say* awards last Thursday, Roy Hattersley lambasted the British press for its "frivolity".

He must have been talking about himself. For Roy boasted recently that his column in the *Guardian*, which he has been turning out every week for a decade, was "inconsequential... style without substance".

There's no denying the lack of substance. However, the shadow home secretary's idea of "style" is to call a spade an implement wherewith one can rearrange topsoil. He fancies himself as a "light essayist", but in fact his *Guardian* pieces are about as light as a tray of undercooked Yorkshire puddings.

Fattersley's main purpose, when not bragging of his grammatical brilliance, is to drop the names of authors whose books he has read — presumably in the hope that some of their literary celebrity will rub off on him. Consider:

5 October 1991: "Contrary to popular belief, I do not carry both volumes of the *Short Oxford Dictionary* in my back pocket..." Boasts of his fondness for the word "plangent" and his knowledge of Matthew Arnold's poem "Dover Beach". Also mentions Kipling, Graham Greene.

12 October: Shows off his knowledge of William Blake's "Jerusalem". Also mentions André Gide, T S Eliot.

19 October: Roy's column is about to move from Saturday to Monday, and he uses the occasion to ponder his skills as a writer. "It is in the tradition of the English light essay — generous in spirit, self-deprecating in tone, and inconsequential in substance — that I have tried to fill this space for almost 10 years." Brackets himself with J B Priestley, Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt, G K Chesterton.

21 October: Muses on ageing. No cliché is omitted: "Growing old ungracefully... going gently into that good night... the best is yet to be". Mentions Dickens, Shakespeare, Browning, Yeats.

28 October: Gets a parcel of books from HMSO. Or, as Roy concisely puts it, he receives "a bibliographical blessing... in a box which had been designed to the specifications of Her Majesty's Stationery Office". Mentions Dickens, H G Wells, Bernard Shaw, E M Forster.

11 November: After the Ken Barlow case, Roy praises bores — largely out of self-interest, it seems. Mentions Tesman in *Hedda Gabler* and Guy Crouchback in Evelyn Waugh's war trilogy.

18 November: While revising for his history A-level Roy used to dream of looking like Rex Harrison. Or, as the light essayist puts it: "At the time of my Harrison idolatry, I was preparing for the Advanced and Scholarship level school certificate examinations."

25 November: Criticises the poor syntax of Conservative MPs — "Illiteracy now seems endemic on the Tory benches" — and boasts that "we, the literati of the Labour Party, have minds which work in quite a different way." Alas! Roy spoils it all by committing a schoolboy error, confusing number with amount: "Tory MPs had no idea about the amount of hours of careful research..."

2 December: Boasts of his "lifetime's addiction to the Immortal Bard", not to mention "the Swan of Avon". "Hamlet", he writes knowingly, "claimed to be more an antique Roman than a Dane." Alas! Roy again displays his ignorance: it was Horatio, not Hamlet.

9 December: A taxi-driver refers to a black bus-driver as an "immigrant". Roy, sitting in the back of the cab, "recognised at once the errors of fact inherent in that opinion. The man who sat behind the driving wheel of the Number 159 was certainly under 30 years of age. So it was almost certain that he had been born in Britain and had the royal cipher in his passport..." Et cetera.

16 December: Roy has not kept a diary. Or, more concisely: "It goes without saying that I have not followed the detestable practice of returning home each evening and making immediate notes about the day's meetings and conversations. Nor have I dictated confidences into a tape recorder with the calculated intention of one day selling them on the open market. I have only memory on which to rely..." In short, he hasn't kept a diary.

23 December: Time for more literary name-dropping. Evelyn Waugh's war trilogy, E M Forster, Dickens, Trollope, Hardy.

6 January: And still they keep coming... Evelyn Waugh, Trollope and, er, Hardy. Oh, and Tesman in *Hedda Gabler*.

20 January: Secrets of Roy's writing technique. "My time on trains is fully occupied in attempting to work my fountain pen. No matter how I try I cannot convince myself that writing with anything which is called BiC [*sic*] or Biro can possibly produce coherent English. To me, ink and syntax are inseparable."

3 February: More syntactical one-upmanship: criticises John Major for saying "none have" instead of "none has".

10 February: "Tribulations of rail travellers are already so well documented that the description of another train trauma has, on the face of it, all the originality of an essay entitled What I Did On My Holidays." Fills the rest of his column with just such a description, stuffed with such phrases as "intolerable inconvenience".

17 February: Having been called "an old-fashioned cloth-cap socialist" by Douglas Hurd, Hattersley rebukes the foreign secretary for "deficiencies in syntax". Later, with a typically light touch, Roy refers to the Queen and the Archbishop of Canterbury as "the aforementioned dignitaries".

HAQUE-WATCH

THE appearance of the universally-despised Muhammad Haque at the forefront of the struggle at Stratford School takes one back to the heady days of the 1980s when Haque's battles against racism were financial as well as verbal.

In those days Haque produced a tasteful journal called *BENTH Bulletin* (Bangladeshi Educational Needs in Tower Hamlets), crammed with vitriolic and not-very-educational attacks on anyone, black or white, who disagreed with Muhammad Haque.

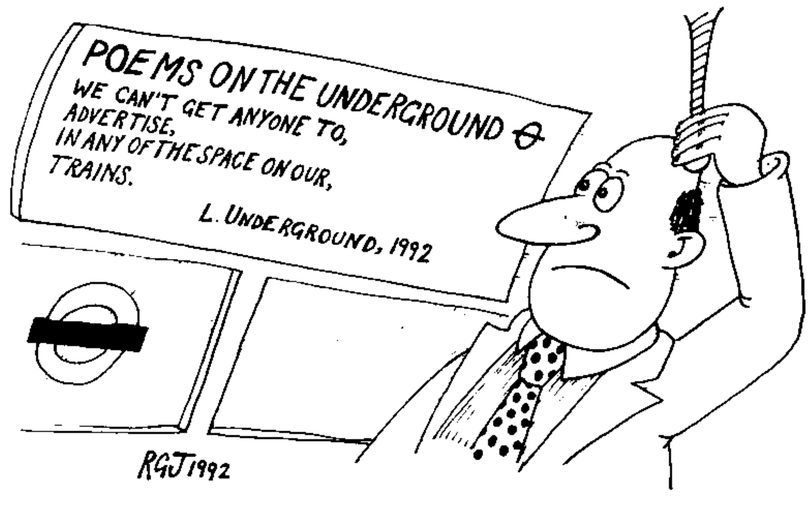
To typeset this riveting organ, he employed a bunch of well-meaning lefties at a firm called Leveller Graphics, who toiled over his illegible hand-written copy for several issues until, weary of his imperious manner, they sent him packing.

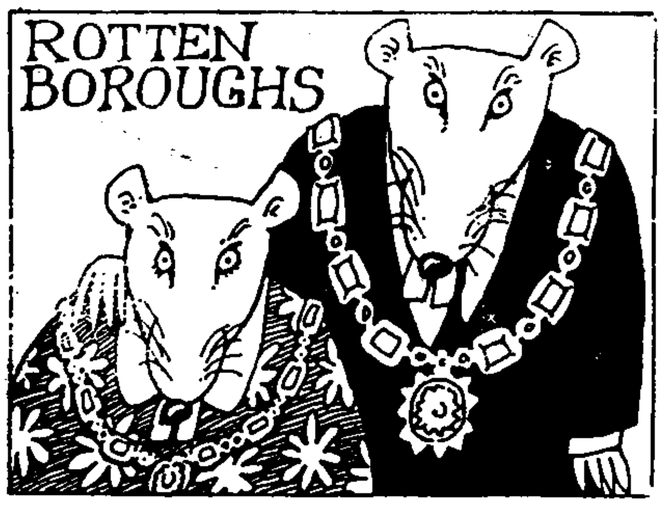
Some time later, these naive souls were employed by a then Lambeth councillor, Greta Akapene, to typeset a mag called *Black Parent* — which, they soon noticed, was filled with very much the same drivel as *BENTH Bulletin*. Much of the copy for the magazine was in Muhammad Haque's exquisite hand, and the fruits of their typesetting eventually began appearing as *BENTH Bulletin*.

Until, one day, no more copy appeared from Haque or Akapene... and neither did payment of a £300-plus bill for typesetting. After a year of trying, which included having letters returned from Haque's address marked "Gone Away" and being accused by Greta Akapene of racism for attempting to secure payment, they gave up and wrote off the bill.

Some time later they discovered that the tireless Haque had now taken his scrawl to another firm of well-meaning lefty typesetters, Bread and Roses — and had defaulted on their bill as well!

This admirable attempt to cripple the Spartist printing and typesetting trade in London was presumably meant to strike a resounding blow against the white middle-class so-called anti, er, racist hypocrites of the...





BENT

IT IS LITTLE wonder that Bent, London's looniest borough, has run up the biggest municipal debt in Britain. For the last 11 years council leaders have been pouring millions of pounds of ratepayers money into the Bridge Park "community" centre, which nestles beneath the tower-block infested Stonebridge Park estate, Europe's largest black ghetto.

Bridge Park, now under threat of closure from the borough's new cost-cutting Tory leaders, has cost the public purse more than £10 million in donations from the council, the European Community, the Sports Council and the GLC (natch) with vociferous support from Prince Charles.

It was set up in 1981 by Bent's then Labour leadership to assuage growing local tensions following the riots elsewhere in Britain and encourage Bent youth to swap petrol bombs for table-tennis bats.

Since then it has been plagued by a series of scandals:

- The opening party attended by Prince Charles lost £18,000.
- A British tour by a Jamaican pop group sponsored by Bridge Park lost £27,000.
- A pop concert for the rival Asian community showed a £16,000 loss at the end of the evening.
- A £50,000 survey carried out by accountants Cooper Lybrand Deloittes discovered that loans to Bridge Park members were being written off — and that contracts were being awarded to companies run by Bridge Park directors.

Although Bent agreed 18 months ago to stage one last rescue package — a £1m injection of funds, the postponing of a £220,000 debt to the council, a £150,000 maximum overdraft and a plan to make the centre self-sufficient after three years — time has run out with Bridge Park bankrupt and the overdraft used up.

Yet Bent is still dithering over Bridge Park's future. Some councillors want the current organisers out and town hall managers in; others want to hand over the centre to North West London College, but it would cost £828,000 to pay off debts. Bridge Park activists are defiantly ignoring Bent's threats and pledging to stay put. They claim, unbelievably, that the taxpayer has had very good value out of the centre and they blame the council for not granting Bridge Park "the one vital push it needed".

The centre's financial problems are being compounded by local parents' unwillingness to let their kids use the facilities. Rumours are rife that Bridge Park is being used as the headquarters for the notorious Stonebridge Park Black Panthers, described by Knacker as the Black Krays, and indeed a number of former Bridge Park board members now reside at Her Maj's pleasure.

One former executive member is serving 17 years for armed robbery. When arrested he had more than £1 million in 25 bank accounts. Another ex-Bridge Park director was jailed for murder after an incident at the centre. Two other centre officials made off with a blank cheque signed by a Bridge Park signatory and travelled to Heathrow en route for Switzerland, hoping to play the commodities market. Tragically, while making a telephone call from the airport the suitcase containing their travellers' cheques was stolen. Unsurprisingly, American Express refused to pay out compensation.

In another extraordinary incident two members of the Bridge Park board were arrested after being found wandering around Harlesden police station in the early hours of the morning. They claimed they were testing security.

BIRMINGHAM

A ROYAL charity set up to train Birmingham's unemployed has given regional health authority boss Sir James Ackers (see *Eyes passim*) another chance to show his entrepreneurial flair — and he's failed again.

Readers will recall that as chair of the West Midlands Regional Health Authority, Ackers privatised its computer bureau to create Qa Business Services. It collapsed within two years with the loss of 300 jobs, only weeks after Ackers's own vehicle leasing company, Ackers Jarrett, had collapsed with receivers removing Ackers as chairman.

Ackers, who would be a Tory MP if any constituency would have him, was made health boss by his chum Norman Fowler under the Tory drive to bring business "brains" into the NHS. But he holds another important position in Britain's second city, too — chairman of Prince Charles's pet charity, Prince's Trust Training and Employment. It is not altogether surprising, then, the the trust's accounts show it made a loss of £110,746 on a turnover of £1.3 million in the year to September 1990.

The accounts were filed three weeks ago — bang on the legal limit — despite being ready for more than a year. And they contain some curious anomalies: for example, the £2,165 spent on rock concert tickets. Ackers is banned from being paid for his work as chairman, but inquiries reveal that before his company Ackers Jarrett went bust it was leasing vehicles to the trust at very commercial rates.

One of the users of those cars was the trust's £40,000-a-year chief executive, Barry Shuttleworth, whose top of the range Granada cost more than £600 a month in leasing charges. Other Ackers Jarrett vehicles were leased to a trust subsidiary, Task Transport, which made a loss of £53,307; while another subsidiary, Task Management Services, lost £32,000, and a third, Task Graphics, more than £4,000.

Coincidentally, Shuttleworth used to be a director of the regional health authority and has since been appointed — by Ackers — to carry out lucrative freelance contract work for it. He was recently threatened with legal action by the city's planning department after he installed an ugly satellite dish on the Grade I listed Curzon Street Station housing the trust to feed a TV in his own private office.

Construction training is a big part of the trust's work and both Ackers and Shuttleworth have done their best to offer trainees real work experience — by using them to carry out home improvements. Ackers had a kitchen installed, plus other improvements; and Shuttleworth a wide range of work. Naturally, both paid full commercial rates.

BARNET

PERHAPS the most bizarre entry in the new *Who's Who* is from Max Caller, chief executive of Barnet council, deep in Thatcherland, north London.

Mr Caller lists among his recreations "picking bluebells with Claire". What can this mean? Some say the bluebell-picker may not be a million miles from Claire Seaborne, a senior "strategic policy analyst" on the council.

Caller is best known at Barnet for the cost of the management review he ordered from Price Waterhouse, of BCCI fame. The report is believed to have cost between £30,000 and £50,000 and led to widespread "restructuring" in senior management. One person whose rapid progress in the council was not affected by the report was Ms Seaborne.

MURKEYSIDE

KEVA COOMBES has been prevented from performing his Lazarus act by Labour's national executive committee, which suspended him and seven other councillors at the end of January, and he cannot stand in this May's council elections.

The suspensions were, of course, politically selective: nothing happened to Trevor "Doggy Bag" Smith, although the lord mayor had broken the whip four times. Others who only broke it once got the heave-ho.

Coombes is definitely *persona non grata* with Walworth Road. When he offered legal help to a prospective Labour candidate recently it was turned down on the grounds that he was "inefficient and incompetent". The candidate was referred to officially approved solicitors — and ended up with a legal bill 10 times the cost of Keva's!

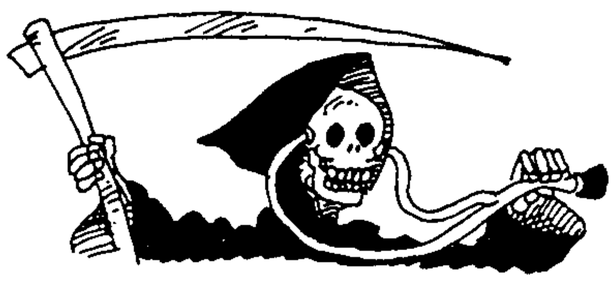
On Murkeyside there are now more Labour councillors outside the official Labour group of Harry Rimmer than in it — 35 to 32. But despite Kinnock's alleged annoyance with Rimmer's performance over the Alison Halford affair (see *Eyes passim*), the Welsh Windbag is pulling out all the stops to keep Rimmer in power.

The measures adopted by Rimmer's supporters to keep the clique in power would bring a blush to the cheeks of the Hattonistas of old. Concern was expressed two years ago (*Eye* 752) at expenses claims made by Dawn Booth and her then paramour, Ian Scott, which totalled £22,391.84. A 15-minute discussion of this was deleted by Joyce Gould from Liverpool Labour group minutes recently sent to the NEC. Gould justified this on the ground that their inclusion would "look bad" for the party.

Chargepayers were pleased to note that Scott and Booth's expenses for 1990/91 only amounted to £19,886.01 combined. Dawn has now left Scottie and returned to her husband Garry — Labour's Liverpool organiser — in true soap opera style.

Meanwhile Vicki Roberts is another Rimmerite who causes controversy. She has kept her maiden name although she is married to Ken Robinson, the director of environmental services currently off on another long spell of absence due to illness. "Queen Victoria" regularly presides over council matters affecting her husband's job, though since July of last year she has made a point of declaring an interest, after attentions from Inspector Knacker.

Then there's Sir Gideon Ben-Tokenism, who thinks he's going to inherit the Rimmer mantle because Roberts will lose her marginal ward on 7 May. By that time he'll probably be the only one left — the rest of the bunch having been expelled, suspended, retired or beaten at the polls.



DOING THE ROUNDS

ANTHONY GOLDSTEIN has become the latest doctor to pay a successful visit to the high court.

Having gained consultant accreditation for the European Community, he was understandably miffed to be refused UK accreditation by the Joint Committee of Higher Medical Training.

After a two-year legal battle, Mr Justice Rose had them reaching for the Rennies at the royal colleges by ruling this to be "perverse".

But Mr Stephen Brearley, consultant surgeon and manpower expert, was not amused: "The purpose of UK accreditation is to attest that someone is ready for a consultant appointment in the UK." This may well account for the paucity of dark and feminine faces in the Royal College of Surgeons' annual photo.

What Mr Brearley failed to explain is how 30 percent of new UK consultants, including the professor of HIV at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, have managed to fast-track it to the top without UK accreditation.

With the BMA set to personalise the issue in a damage limitation exercise, the Hospital Doctors' Association is calling for the General Medical Council to replace such "restrictive practices" with openly restructured and properly regulated training. The days when the public invests huge amounts of money in competent doctors who complete their training only to fall at the "white-CofE-testicle" hurdle may be numbered.

● A ROW HAS broken in the Bermuda triangle of **Somerset** trusts: **Taunton, Yeovil** and **Weston.** All are understandably anxious to perform as many money-spinning routine operations as possible, but the irritating obligation to treat less lucrative emergencies has allowed sick "bed-blockers" to force cancellations.

Now managers at **Yeovil** and **Weston** hospitals are using a cunning ploy to protect routine admissions: they fib about their bed state, close the hospital to emergencies and divert blue-light ambulances through the fog to Taunton, a major trauma centre which never closes.

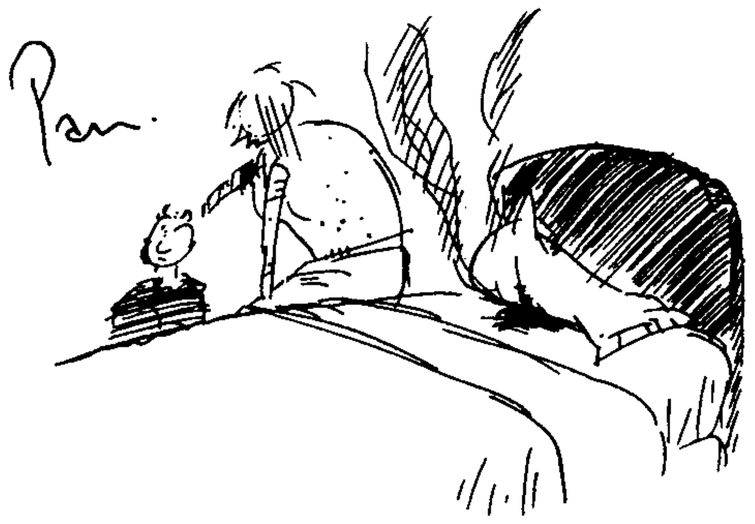
Wards in **Taunton** are often bulging with "hot" and "cold" patients (and no extra staff to look after them). "Big Ed" McNally, chief executive of Taunton and Somerset Trust, is soon to be unleashed on his neighbours to try to recoup compensation for treating their emergencies. With **Somerset** set to swell in the holiday season, prospective grockles would be wise to arrive with a note from their health authority guaranteeing to cough-up in case of emergency.

● AT **GUY'S** Hospital — the Trust Flagship Doing Very Nicely Thankyou: Only Two Million Under But Definitely Still In The NHS — Dr David Bihari, head of the cash-starved intensive care unit, is so peeved about non-payment for treating patients from **City** and **Hackney** health authorities he's demanding a written guarantee of payment before letting any of them within gagging distance of a ventilator.

● THE TREND to perform major operations in under-supervised private hospitals continues, with NHS managers ever keen to pass the buck and recession-hit independents desperate to receive it.

A patient recently underwent an oesophagectomy in the Georgian splendour of The **Bath** Clinic only to be left in the post-operative clutches of a recently qualified and understandably anxious junior doctor. As a rule of thumb, procedures that involve opening the chest and removing the gullet are best observed on an NHS intensive care unit with the odd consultant to hand... unless they happen to be "waiting list initiatives".

Talking of which, a **Bristol** GP referred an arthritic, illiterate, alcoholic vagrant to her friendly, local orthopod only to receive a letter stating that as the waiting list for such referrals was 63 weeks, the client was being redirected to **Cosham** Hospital to see an out-of-town artisan who would then arrange for the operation to be done in **Oxford.** The client was expected to make his own travel arrangements.



"I'm sorry, darling, but there's no such thing as a poo fairy!"

● THE Royal Gwent Hospital in **Newport,** like **Cheltenham** (*Eye* 787) and many other district generals, employs inexperienced junior doctors to cover the special care baby unit and labour wards with only a consultant-at-home for back-up.

The unit turns over 4,500 babies a year, all of which require oxygen to the brain well before the 30 minutes it takes a paediatrician to arrive in an emergency. One doctor was left alone to ventilate a 28-week-old baby on a new machine with an instruction manual in German. Meanwhile, in **Chepstow,** junior plastic surgeons are clocking up 100 hours a week, a mere ten years after attempts to abolish such rotas.

● UNSCRUPULOUS managers have found a cheap way to appear to reduce doctors' hours without altering the rota. They simply cut the number of contracted (ie, reimbursable) hours and then refuse to acknowledge that extra-contractual hours exist.

Many juniors start at 8am and stay as late as 10pm to do essential work, but are only credited with an eight-hour shift on health minister Virginia Bottomley's abacus. Those who wish to seek reimbursement for extra hours are then forced to go to court.

M.D.

HUNT NEWS

THE Campaign for Hunting — an alliance between the National Hunting Club, the Master of Foxhounds Association and the British Field Sports Society — took out full-page press ads in the days preceding Kevin McNamara private member's bill to ban the hunting of wild mammals.

The format was simple enough: at the top of the page was a photograph of a man said to be a hunt protester who appeared to be shouting at the photographer. The caption read: "The voice of reason?" and the text invited readers to speculate about the potential for thuggery of the subject before listing celebrities who defended the right of citizens to hunt.

The story behind the photograph, which the Campaign for Hunting did not explain, is a little more complicated. The picture is from a video taken of the Old Surrey and Burstow Foxhunt, and the subject, one Martin Bright of the North Downs branch of the Hunt Saboteurs Association, has just witnessed a hunt follower run over a domestic cat in his car. That is why Mr Bright is angry and upset.

However, the irony is richer still. This particular saboteur was severely beaten up in September 1990 by three supporters of the Old Surrey and Burstow. The three assailants were recently convicted: Nigel Trevithick-Wood was given a six months' suspended prison sentence and fined £1200; whipper-in Mark Bycroft was sentenced to 150 hours' community service; and a third man received two suspended prison sentences of four and 12 months respectively. The voice of reason?

'Reynard'

DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'Old Muckspreader'

THE WELSH Farmers' Union has come up with another bizarre tale to prove that its boyos are still alive and kicking. They are now claiming that Birmingham city council has been secretly filling double decker buses with urban foxes and releasing them on the Brecon Beacons at dead of night.

This is absolute nonsense, of course. But Old Muck can reveal the truth behind this hoary old folk-tale: the buses are on hire to a consortium set up by the Vale of Neath's Hunt Supporter's Club and the Small Green Vegetable Marketing Board. And early strollers around Birmingham international market will have seen the buses discharging their return loads of Class 2 leeks.

Nothing daunted, the boyos from Aberystwyth are now applying their campaigning might to proving that a footpath in the village of Bryncrug, Gwynedd, isn't really there. Although ramblers regularly walk the path between Pandy and Tynllwyn, Huw Jones, the union's man in Merioneth, says it doesn't exist.

Bryncrug community council has accepted his word and voted that it shouldn't exist. The only people now walking the path are newcomers, claims the council, and they can't be expected to know it isn't there. A spokesman for Gwynedd county council commented: "The fact that a footpath appears on an Ordnance Survey map merely indicates that there is a path. However, the fact that a footpath is not shown does not mean it does not exist."

This is clearly a matter for the intervention board for agricultural produce. When it comes to making things disappear, no one's sharper than the team in Reading.

JOVIAL David Naish, the NFU's able and articulate president, spends a lot of time arguing that farm subsidies are vital to keep his hard-pressed members from penury and despair. The truth, of course, is that state handouts are merely a way of propping up land prices for greedy landlords and speculators.

The cat has been let out of the bag by snooty land agents Strutt & Parker. Bill Miller, Strutt's man in East Anglia, has disclosed just how much the purchaser of a 300-acre coastal farm will make without planting a bean.

First there's £14,300 a year in a special subsidy for allowing Brent geese to occupy the land during the winter. Then there's £1,500 for letting the shooting rights to the local wildfowling club.

Then, says Miller, the new owner can put the farm's arable land into set-aside, the EC-funded wheeze that will net him £9,000 a year from the payers of VAT. The UK Government will then cough up a further £3,640 annually in environmental hand-outs simply because some of the farm happens to occupy grazing marshes.

Finally there's £6,000 a year to be earned from letting the barn to a local business for storage. This is possible since John Major decided that planning law would not apply to farmers.

Thus the farm for which Strutt's client paid £271,000 earns £32,000 a year without a crop being grown, thanks largely to the generosity of the taxpayer. As the smart agents chortle to would-be investors: "The level of grants and payments now available have created a basis below which farming land values are unlikely to fall."

Meanwhile subsidy minister John Seldom Glummer bangs on about EC reform plans being little more than a pension scheme for French peasants. Given the choice, taxpayers might prefer pensioning a peasant than guaranteeing a 12 per cent return to absentee City investors who produce nothing.

Letters

Cross Maltese

Sir,

The writer of the letter headed MALTEASER *in* EYE *787 — who wishes to remain anonymous... and one wonders why!! — is somewhat behind the times when he talks about Malta's political position as regards Libya.*

There used to be a strong link between the Malta Labour Party and Gaddafi when the latter conned the former into tearing up the defence treaty with NATO and the British in return for cheap petrol and £30 million a year. The cheap petrol is there, but the money never materialised, which led to the then PM Dom Mintoff to admit on Malta TV that Gaddafi had deceived him.

However, five years ago Mintoff and the Labour Party were booted out of office, and the Nationalists (Conservatives) have done much to repair the international damage caused by Labour, so much so that Bush and Gorbachev chose to hold one of their summit meetings in Malta.

The offer to hold the trial in Malta came from Dr Eddie Fenech Adami, the Maltese PM, who in his five years in office has shown he is nobody's puppet.

Your anonymous letter writer goes on to mention the incompetence of the Maltese police. True, they are not very competent, mainly because they don't have the sophisticated technology of their British counterpart... and in any case, they are rarely required to deal with big crime. True also, under Labour, they were simply an extension of the political party, though this was put right by Fenech Adami as soon as he took office in 1987.

No matter how incompetent your correspondent might feel they are, I am willing to wager that 1,000 Maltese policemen using the kind of state of the art technology used by the British bobby, would not have allowed a kidnapper to make off with a £175,000 ransom!

By the way, do print my name and address. Perhaps your anonymous writer would like to get in touch with me so I can put him up to date about Malta and the Maltese.

Yours faithfully,
JOE AQUILINA-ST JOHN,

London NW9.

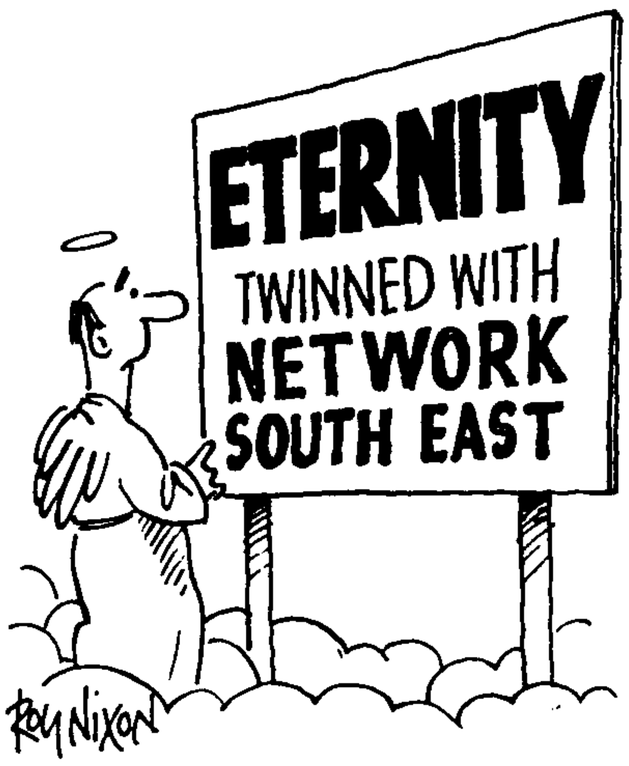
Off the rails

Sir,

Your 'Rotten Boroughs' piece on Haringey has one slight inaccuracy. The light rail idea comes from an independent group which has been in existence for some time and has some merit (I used to work at Alexandra Palace in BBC days).

Yours,
RICHARD MACQUEEN

Enfield, Middlesex.



Paddy nostra

Sir,

An article, prominently displayed on your first page, libels Mr Hogg.

You wrote: "'Special advisers' briefed Douglas Hogg on the threat to security in Ulster caused by accomplished solicitors defending innocent nationalists. Hogg told the Commons and Belfast solicitor Finucane was shot dead. Hogg was at that time parliamentary under-secretary to the Home Office.

"Brian Nelson, the British army agent/murderer was involved in the cold-blooded shooting of Finucane for successfully defending so many innocent prisoners. Shooting ordinary republicans was run-of-the-mill for Nelson and his friends in the UDA. Finucane was irritating to assassins and their British intelligence masters. Brian Nelson knew about the approach to Hogg and would have told a court that Hogg had encouraged the murder" so he was offered the plea-bargain of his choice to hush up the scandal of Hogg.

In Ulster solicitors are the godfathers of the paramilitary mobs. Solicitors advise and control the paramilitaries. Mr Hogg was explaining the truth. Arlacchi described the social structure of organised crime in MAFIA BUSINESS *and Martin Dillon, who has written three large hardbacks on Ulster, independently gave details of how Ulster solicitors operate, describing the Arlacchi principles.*

"This lawyer-terrorist connection is a devastating weapon in the terrorist armoury and the PUBLIC HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW." *Which is why Mr Hogg tried to tell us. Unless you are sued for libel* REPUBLICAN NEWS *will re-print your article to intimidate Northern Ireland ministers into silence about terrorism. You are promoting mafia Omerta.*

Yours faithfully,
SUE DOBB,

London NW3.

Bullet proof

Sir,

Reading the airline security article which appeared in the EYE *today reminded me of an incident which took place in May 1990, i.e. post-Lockerbie, when I was a member of a well-known British army unit involved in counter-terrorism.*

One particular weekend my girlfriend and I decided to go to Amsterdam for a long weekend. We took a scheduled British Airways flight from Heathrow and all was tickety-boo until we arrived at our hotel and I came to unpack my small rucksack which I had taken on board the plane as hand baggage.

To my sick shock I found, in one of the compartments, a box of 50 rounds of 9-millimetre ammunition that I had inadvertently left in the bag the day before when shooting on the ranges. The rucksack had not only been through the X-ray machine, but had also been hand-searched by one of the Heathrow security personnel. It is hard to mistake a 9 mm bullet for anything else. I've been at Central American "banana republic" airports with better security. I threw the ammunition into a handy canal.

I didn't report this at the time as I didn't relish the flak (no pun intended) and I hope you don't mind if I remain anonymous now for the same reason.

Yours faithfully,
X. SOLDIER.

Doodles bugged

Sir,

*Despite the circumstances, I was rather amused to read your attack on the libel award to Esther Rantzen (*EYE *784). Whilst I make no comment on the actual amount awarded, your organ's eloquent defence of the People's criticism smacked of pure humbug. You say that Rats was attacked as a result of her "not publicly exposing" me for writing "child pornography". The truth, of course, has never appeared in print — perhaps because it might just raise awkward questions about human rights and civil liberties in this wonderful country of ours.*

Without labouring the point, the so-called "child pornography" was a series of amateur cartoons and scribbles composed by me between the ages of 15 to 17 when I was still at school. The material DOES *involve child abuse — mostly concerned with things that happened to me as a child. That I was stupid to retain such papers in my possession goes without saying, but it was not a criminal act. The dating of the material — disputed by the People — was supported by Dr David Baxendale of the Home Office forensic laboratories (of the Tottenham Three appeal fame).*

When this material was stolen and copied during a burglary at my flat in 1988 it was then kept for a year before being hawked around to the media in an effort to discredit me and destroy my career. As a result of this an extensive police investigation was conducted in 1989, followed by another in early 1991 when the People published their three articles about me. No evidence of any critical activities on my part emerged and I have never been arrested or charged with any offence. The file is now officially closed, although the self-confessed burglar has never been charged.

I met Rantzen once in early 1989 for about 20 minutes, but that was enough to give the story "celebrity status". She is now accused of failing to tell the nation about me! What was she supposed to say? Have we really reached the point that people have to be persecuted for things written when they were children? Female rape victims are guaranteed anonymity. I have had the details of what happened to me printed in national newspapers, presumably to titillate the jaded appetites of their readership.

At my libel trial against the People in November 1991 I was the only person whose case was not underwritten by a vast media empire and I had to represent myself since I couldn't afford a QC. I still managed to win, despite knowing next to nothing about law and being tripped up by every legal trick in the book. The media coverage of the trial was farcical — I came to suspect that it was a case of all the newspapers hanging together, because if an ordinary person without means managed to defeat a giant like MGN, then they would all hang separately. Whilst the media — including yourselves — had a good laugh because I received 0p in damages, virtually no one mentioned the £150,000 it cost MGN.

For the record, I was the only member of staff at Crookham Court who actually went to the police about Cadman's activities; the rest of the virtuous hypocrites turned a blind eye, as did your own organ when provided with a large package of material to investigate in February 1989. The school remained open until June and Cadman buggered on. If Rats is accused of keeping quiet about me when I had done nothing illegal, PRIVATE EYE *did the same about Cadman when the evidence against him was overwhelming!*

Yours faithfully,
ALEX STANDISH,

London EC4.

O.B.N.

The lovely Jane Asher has three talented children, writes books and is a marvellous actress.

She's also so naturally slim she can eat endless slices of the ambrosial cakes she sells in her shop. She always looks as though she's just washed her lustrous hair before slipping into something simple by Giorgio Armani. In fact, taking things all round, she makes you want to lock yourself in a cupboard, burst into tears and give up.

LYNDA LEE POTTER
Daily Mail

Congratulations on your new Television and Radio section. It is excellently sized and in all ways much better than the magazine put out by the BBC. How anyone who buys the Sunday Times could want to go on buying any other programme magazine I do not know.

R. WEST
Letter to Sunday Times

Submitted by Helen [Illegible], S.R. Lloyd.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

Fuel hardy

Sir,

Your over-dramatised personal attack on me (World of Hype, 787) for communicating facts about the power station fuel Orimulsion helpfully refers readers to EYES PASSIM. *That must be the letter from Robert Edwards (*EYE *JAN 20 approx. for which, alas, I can claim no credit) correcting the fiction you last wrote about the fuel. And still you fantasize about "this disgusting product".*

I can tell you factually why I am "persuaded by the virtues" of Orimulsion. It compares favourably with other fossil fuels, meeting every aspect of health, safety and environmental legislation, and generates competitively-priced electricity which homes and industries welcome.

This is a liquid fuel that is easy to transport without creating dust problems, and is clean-burning. Minimal amounts of methane are released and there are comparatively low emissions of another "greenhouse gas" carbon dioxide. Emissions of nitrogen oxide, which can cause "acid rain", are also low.

Manufactured from natural bitumen in Venezuela, Orimulsion has the merit of a consistent sulphur content (2.7 per cent on a weight basis, compared with ranges of 1 to 4 per cent for heavy fuel oil and 0.5 to 3 per cent for coal) enabling generators to plan ahead accurately the amount of fuel to be used to keep sulphur emissions within permitted levels.

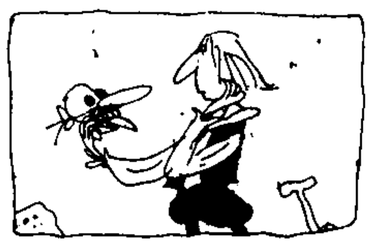
Though all fuels have some unpleasant ingredients, Orimulsion happens to be low down this list. You mentioned vanadium, which is reduced to extremely low levels by power station equipment called electrostatic precipitators.

There is no "cynical abandon" by me of the UK coal industry which I am pleased to see performing admirably to beat off its main competition from imported coal. Orimulsion's commendable strategy is to give a new lease of life, with only modest modifications, to the under-used but modern oil-fired power stations throughout Europe, reduced to ticking over following the oil price explosion of 1973.

Your speculation about my pension from the coal industry's contributory superannuation scheme is laughable.

Yours faithfully,
NORMAN WOODHOUSE,

Direct Communications, Banstead, Surrey.



LUVVIES

That Alan Ayckbourn's new play should be replaced by a male strip show is not a Good Thing or a Bad Thing; it is just a Thing that we actors get a whiff of, like gazelles realising a leopard is close. We examine our muscles, observe our pallor and laugh hugely, our eyes glittering with fear.

JOANNA LUMLEY
Telegraph Magazine

I'm a huge fan of Bogarde. He's one of the greatest actors alive. To get the effect he did in *The Night Porter*, to make the audience jump. For an actor a moment like that is better than sex.

GARY OLDMAN
Arena

Submitted by Kath Viner, Matthew Hanson.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 for contributions.

What a pathetic way to make a living

Sir,

We act for Ripley's Entertainment Ltd who trade as Ripley's Believe it or Not! It has been brought to the attention of our clients that in the PRIVATE EYE *publication of 22 November 1991 appeared an article in the humorous section of the magazine under the heading Ridley's Believe it or Not!*

We have advised our client that the article constitutes an infringement of their copyright. We would be obliged to hear from you with confirmation that the article is a one-off humorous spoof and that you have no intention of repeating the article or producing an article in similar vein.

You will appreciate that our clients vigorously protect their intellectual property rights but if they can be reassured there is no intention to infringe their copyright again then they may be able to consider this matter less seriously than would otherwise be the case.

We await hearing from you and in the meantime we must advise you that our clients rights in respect of this matter are fully reserved.

Yours faithfully,
STEVENSON & SCHULMAN,

Reading.

Elizabeth R's licker

Sir,

*Grovel should sack his sources! His little paragraphs (*EYE *787) about my programme* ELIZABETH R *contain not a scintilla of truth.*

I always intended to make the film almost exclusively about the Queen. That's how it was set up in the first place. Everyone in the palace knew this, and was fully in agreement too. Prince Philip was not edited out. The palace has not complained — quite the contrary. And your "informed" figure of my budget is an exaggeration by at least 100 percent.

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD MIRZOEFF,

Producer/Director ELIZABETH R, *BBC Television, London W14.*

Tit bit

Sir,

We've all had a basinful of Hunt News. Why weep over a few hundred wild foxes when, every year, half a billion screaming and terrified animals are slaughtered for the delectation of snivelling, bleeding-heart hypocrites such as yourself? Mote and beam.

Besides, everybody knows that foxes must be culled. Why not turn your attention to completely unnecessary cruelty such as kosher and halal slaughtering methods?

Yours faithfully,
R.P.C. PLOWDEN,

London W2.

Corpus delecti

Sir,

There I was congratulating myself on rubbing shoulders with someone really distinguished at Corpus and up jumps V. Cunningham to claim that Potter never read English there at all.

The funny thing is that I remember Potter attending tutorials with Freddie Bateson, then the Corpus English tutor, as I did, but have no recollection at all of any Cunninghams adorning the top table.

Is it all perhaps a fiendish plot to conceal the company kept by the secretary of state for health and the junior minister of fish as students?

I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
NICK PARSONS,
Corpus Christi 1965-68,

Drumnadrochit, Inverness-shire.

That's enough Ed

Sir,

*Grovel's piece about Eddie Mirzoeff and the Duke of Ed (*EYE *787) is both astonishing and ludicrous.*

Grovel has been a long time in the business — so have you. Do you honestly believe the palace and the Beeb would permit ANY *producer to express his private feelings in a film about You Know Whom? That Buck Pal would have agreed to a programme and relinquished editorial control? Even if they had, that the Beeb itself would have been so disloyal as to allow a mere hack to have his opinion, assuming he* HAS *any?*

Surely the only person who could have sanctioned The DoE's non-appearance was Zorba himself. And if, as Grovel suggests, there was an independent mind at work in the Beeb making independent judgements (since when?), then why was the programme 150 mins of unrelieved factual narrative; why one long, turgid plod from one bland "incident" to the next without a single analytical comment; and why Mirzeoff?

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD WEST,

Richmond, Surrey.

PS: *The Royal Performance of 20 years ago was entitled* THE ROYAL FAMILY, *complete with Phil. This one was* E2R. *Maybe there's a clue here.*

Lookalike

Blandford **Patten**

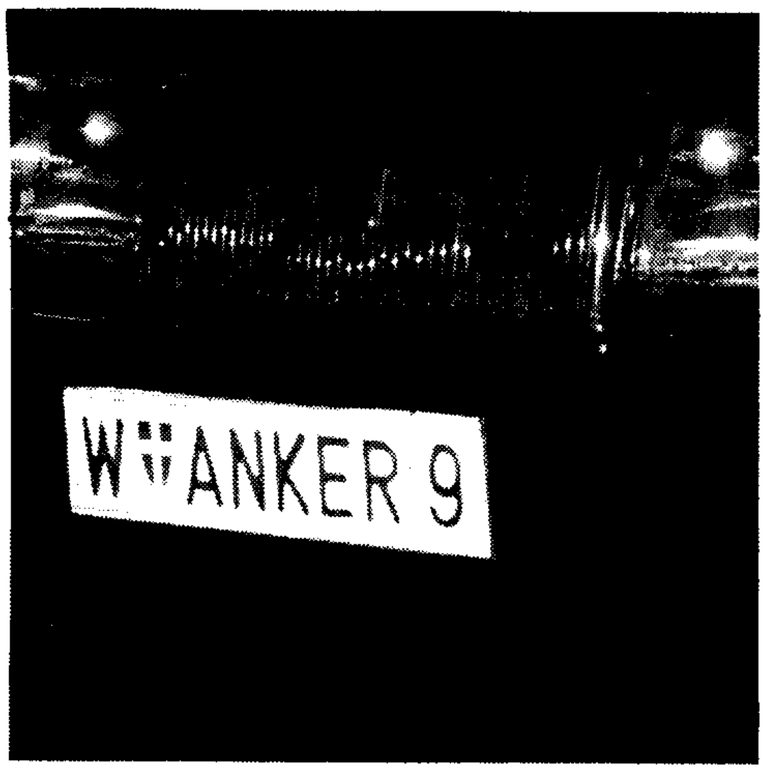
Sir,

Have any of your readers noticed the resemblance between the Marquis of Blandford and Christopher Patten, senior Conservative? Are they by any chance related? Or would such a suggestion constitute the kind of outrageous smear with which no Tory statesman would wish to be associated?

Yours sincerely,
K. NOLAN.

Cambridge.

I-SPY *Vienna*



Submitted by Mark Dillen. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No trasnparencies.)*

Piggy banks

Sir,

Following letters in previous EYEs, *I can recount a further example of NatWest Bank attempting to squeeze money out of it's "ordinary" clients.*

I've been banking with NatWest for over four years and last September they decided to charge me £46 for "unauthorised borrowing" despite the fact that my (very small) overdraft had not increased. Eventually they agreed to refund this — but only after I'd agreed an overdraft facility which will cost me £64 a year.

NatWest's "bully boy" tactics seemed to start suspiciously close to the revelations about Maxwell and the money NatWest had lent him. Did they know something we didn't? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN SNOWDON,

Watford.

Down-under done

Sir,

*I've joined Mr Sirot (*EYE *785) and Mr Masterson (*EYE *786) in helping to boost the "Pay Cap'n Bob's Debt Fund".*

For a friend I sent a ten dollar Australian note into my account then rang to see how much the note was worth.

NatWest told me it was worth £4 and that their fee for exchanging it was £3.50.

So they had exchanged ten Australian dollars for 50p.

It's nice to learn from their advertising "We're here to make life easier". For whom?

Yours faithfully,
JANE COURTNEY,

Billingshurst, Sussex.

Pack of Three

Sir,

*I have noted a strange resemblance between a recently described attempt (*GUARDIAN, *17 Feb) by Ms Germaine Greer to accost a certain Richard Ingrams in the toilet of the Brighton train for amusing sexual purposes and the date rape phenomenon now much decried by the feminist lobby. Could they by any chance be related? I think we should be told.*

Yours pruriently,
DON HOSKINS,

London SW17.

Sir,

I have bought a PRIVATE EYE *today but it will be my last.*

I do think it should be possible to produce a humorous magazine that does not contain so much filthy language that it cannot be left around the house but must be hidden away in shame.

There is a sad lack, today, of an amusing publication that isn't offensively dirty.

Yours regretfully — as I have been a regular reader,
E. SIMPSON,

Harrogate.

Sir,

A million thanks. I don't know how I have managed to live for 41 years without knowing the French slang terms for fellatio.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL THOMPSON,

Shrewsbury.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Welsh winger has the ball but Brendan Mullin is breathing down his throat."
HECTOR MACNEILL, BBC TV
(Eric Thurley)

"As the ball came over, Speed threw his head at it."
COMMENTATOR, BBC 2
(James Hickey)

Shane Ritchie: *" Where did you shoot your video?"*
Contestant: *"Ibiza."*
Shane Ritchie: *"Have you been to Ibiza?"*
BBC 1
(L. Anderson)

"The Labour Party want to destroy the bottom rung of the escalator."
MICHAEL HOWARD, Channel 4
(Martin Smith)

"Who he [Saddam Hussein] kills dies."
JEFFREY ARCHER, Radio 2
(P. Keane)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN

Letter from Haiti

from Our Own Correspondent

TWO-THIRDS of the way through a bottle of Barbancourt rum, Joseph Nerette was playing dominoes with his gardener when the call came. The generals had chosen well: the diminutive, malleable former high court judge of a country that boasts no known judicial system is just the sort of man one wants as president when one has just shot one's way to power in a coup costing 2,500 lives.

Its back to politics as normal here in Port-au-Prince after the brief abberation of the democratically-elected government of leftist priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Nerette — always as keen to reassure his military masters as world opinion — insists he has no ambitions beyond retirement back to his garden, although his 13-stone wife has decided the elephantine National Palace suits her. Thus the 90-day mandate of the "interim" government — now as bizarre a contradiction as the "constitutional coup" Nerette says brought him to power — seems certain to be extended again next month.

The coup and its fearsome repression have just added to *la misère* of a country that is already a byword for negative superlatives: the poorest, most unstable, most ecologically degraded and not least, the most superstitious. The presidential chair has long been cursed, according to the mob. Aristide refused to use it and had several rooms in the Duvalier's hermetically-sealed living quarters exorcised.

But while our new emperor plays, Port-au-Prince burns. The initial anger generated by Aristide's ouster was doused not just by savage repression but with the economic embargo that pushed up prices and cost 100,000 jobs. The crowd has little left to lose. Rage is concentrated on the US ambassador, and Washington's performance has indeed been extraordinary, even by its own unusual standards.

It is emphatic that only 500 — a fifth of the generally accepted figure — died in the coup, despite the fact that the embassy's only known monitoring activity was to evacuate all human rights personnel as "non-essential" within hours of the replacement of Aristide's replacement.

Stripped of the excuse of Soviet expansionism in the region and embarrassed by President Bush's showy rhetoric about a new world order in which might would not be right, the Washington spin doctors have groped despairingly to explain the US's failure to lift a finger to help Aristide.

Fear of the ragtag Haitian army had to be ruled out early on — it's well-known that the Second World War bolt-loading rifles they got as military aid don't work. Portraying Aristide as a dictator-in-waiting looks even more embarrassing, given who and what has replaced him. The final answer seems to be not to even bother to look for an excuse. After all, few have noticed the hypocrisy of pretending that forcibly repatriated boat people face "no obvious threat" in a country where, as even Washington admits, torture and killings are now the norm.

Could it be that Haitians are being punished for the impertinence of preferring Aristide to the US-endorsed candidate in last year's elections? Perish the thought! The trouble seems to be that Haitians have taken Uncle Sam at his word: we really thought that to win the most votes was to guarantee victory. We might have done better to listen more closely to a Bush adviser who unadvisedly remarked at the vote count in December 1990: "The people have spoken, the bastards."

Now it seems the people must learn. Of course, it's quite proper to send 250,000 men more than halfway round the world to restore an autocratic emir to his feudal fiefdom; but quite unthinkable to send the 140 marines the military strategists believe would be needed to reinstate a democratically-elected priest to the leadership of a bankrupt republic 500 miles off the Florida coast.

As we Haitians are now saying: "The Americans have spoken, the bastards."

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

TRUE STORIES

Illuminated by BERT KITCHEN

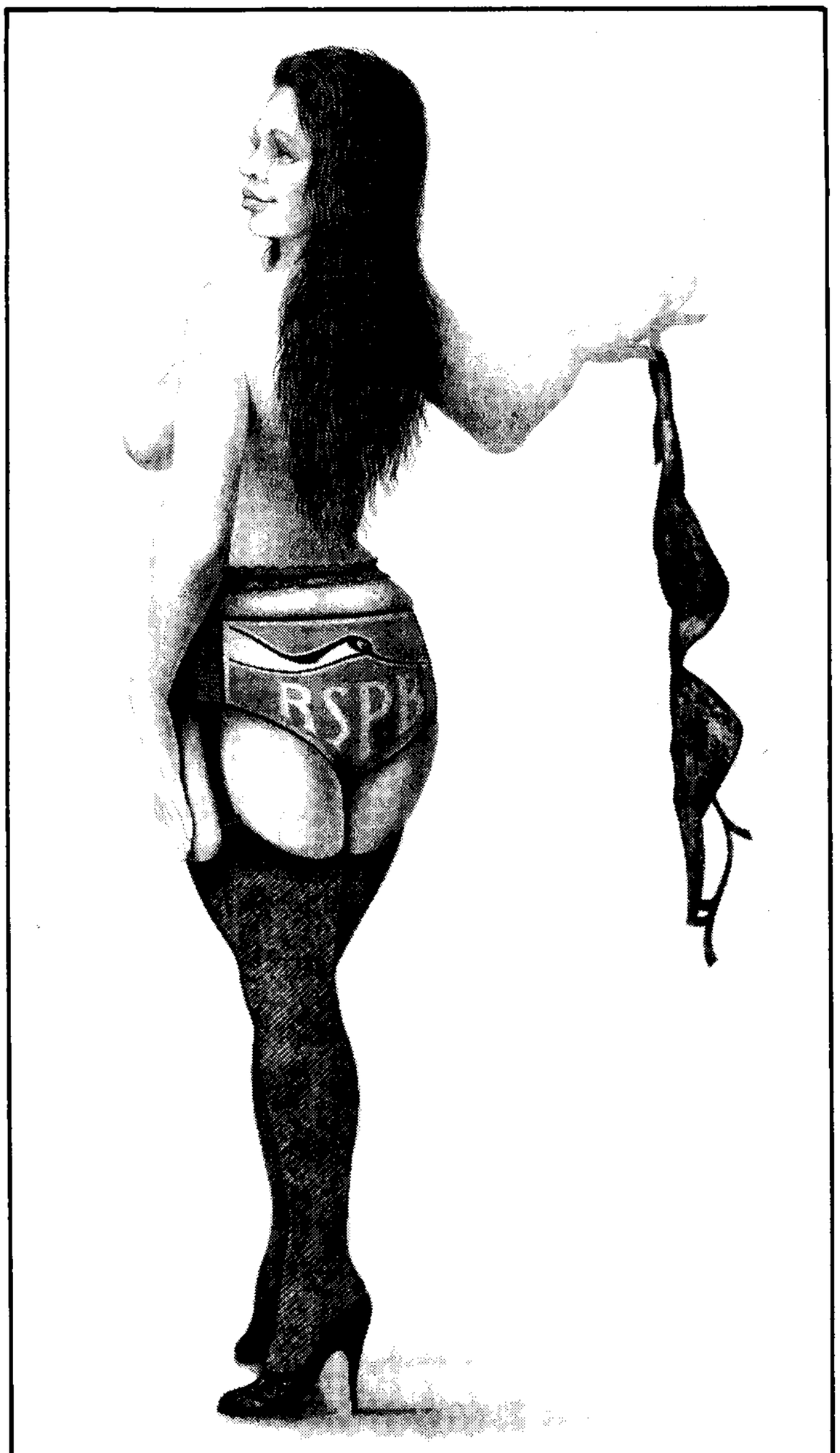
OVERCOME by his dislike of "frolicking homosexuals, who dart in and out of the gorse on Blackford Hill," Edinburgh, Mr Robert Duncan set the bushes on fire and three minutes later was arrested and charged with fire-raising by the two plainclothes policemen who "staggered out of the blaze with blackened faces and smouldering jeans".

"Plainclothesmen patrol this haunt on a regular basis," said Sheriff Hazel Aronson, putting Mr Duncan on probation for 18 months. Sheriff Aronson warned him against taking the law into his own hands, and reminded him of his long criminal record, "were it not for which, you would be going to prison".

IN AN effort to control the number of stripteasers working in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, the Council has announced a big increase in the licence fees their impresarios will have to pay to the wards in question.

"However," their spokesman went on to say, "churches and registered charities will be given a discount and will only pay the going rate of £70 a show."

MISS NAOMI PARKER, a choir-woman in the Church of Holy Redemption, Lexington, Kentucky, has been charged with assault after throwing a saucerful of drain cleaner at Mr G.L. Ormes, who was singing off-key.



DURING his interview, Mr Jesus Aksata, the Chief Security Officer for the Thika District Hospital, Kenya, said: "It is true to say that High Chief Robert Mutungi is in our intensive care unit, having been stabbed in the buttocks by Mr Eric Mututu, whose wife the High Chief was found making love to in the hall of Mr Mututu's own house.

"The matter attracted the interest of many local people because Chief Mutungi has a reputation for this sort of behaviour and he had just finished giving a talk to the local people on the importance of morals in tribal life.

"Soon after the Chief was admitted to hospital, Mr Mututu, who was waving the Chief's trousers on a stick, led a crowd up to the hospital to demand the Chief be given up to them. I called the police and Mr Mututu was arrested at once."

Inspector James Tugawe said: "This is the first I have heard of the trousers. But I know that Mrs Mututu was spotted at about 3.00pm boarding a bus for an unknown destination."

OBSERVED by Mr Clarence Williams of the local Keep Britain Tidy group as he tossed a packet out of the sunroof of his Escort while driving through Merton, Mr George Georgiou, a footballer, admitted to littering but told the court: "A cat ran out in front of my car and my instincts made me throw the packet out to avoid hitting it."

SPEAKING after his appointment as the new Assistant Police Director, General Boonthin Wrongakmit said: "I shall be introducing an all-round shoot-to-kill policy towards our criminals. As police chief of North-East Thailand for 37 years I always used this policy. Any known underworld figure was shot on sight."

Asked how he could be sure his men always got the right people, the General said: "You could tell by the look of them. In any case, I had 100 per cent public support. Not one single complaint in 37 years. Very few policemen can say that."

INFORMATION: Daily Record 4.12.91; East London Advertiser 18.11.91; Wellington Dominion 29.11.91; Standard on Sunday 22.12.91; Hammersmith Guardian 22.11.91; New Straits Times 6.12.91.

MONITORS: Graham Stephen, Anon, John Prebble, Max Berry, Peter Wilkinson, Diane Weatherhead.

Yes! It's House of Commons Cockney Rhyming Slang

(as banned by the Speaker, Mr Bernard Weatherill)

Pork pies	**Lies**
Tall stories	**Tories**
Load of cock	**Neil Kinnock**
Dem Lib	**Fib**
House of Lords	**Bunch of frauds**
Question Time	**Lying swine**
Dispatch box	**Complete bollox**

(That's enough slang. Ed.)

"He has to crawl to the newsagents for his evening paper as well"

ПРАВДЕУЕ

Still only 12 million roubles (or one potato)

Friday
February 28
1992

DEFECTORS PUT ON SHOW SHOCK

by Our Traitor Staff Anthony Burgess and MacDonald McLean

London, Tuesday

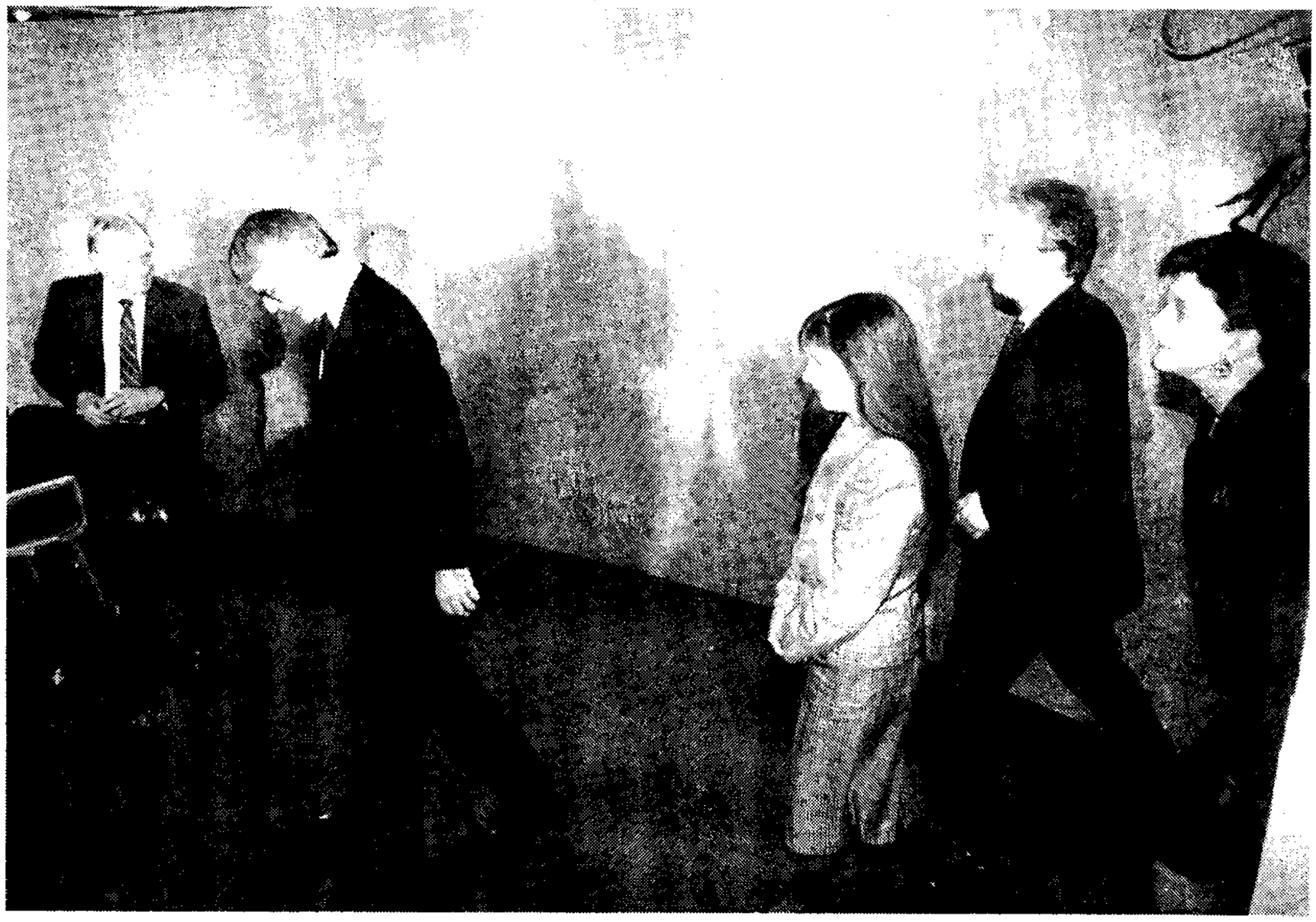
YESTERDAY the British leader, John Major, called an extraordinary press conference at the Conservative Central Office in London, where, to the amazement of observers from both home and abroad, he paraded a string of mostly young defectors.

Their heads bowed in shame, the former members of the hated SDP confessed their "crimes" amidst gasps from the press corps.

Said one, formerly the Head of Envelopes in SDP head office:

"We are under no pressure from Mr Major to make these confessions. We come here of our own free will to apologise to the Conservative Party. We were wrong. We admit it openly."

Another, youth chess grandmaster Nigel Shortovloyalty, agreed. Reading from a statement, he declared in a low monotone: "We now realise the wisdom of Prime Minister Major and the benevolence of the Party. We renounce Owenism in all its forms. We embrace communism *(shurely 'Conservatism'? Ed)*. Long live John Major. Vote Tory."

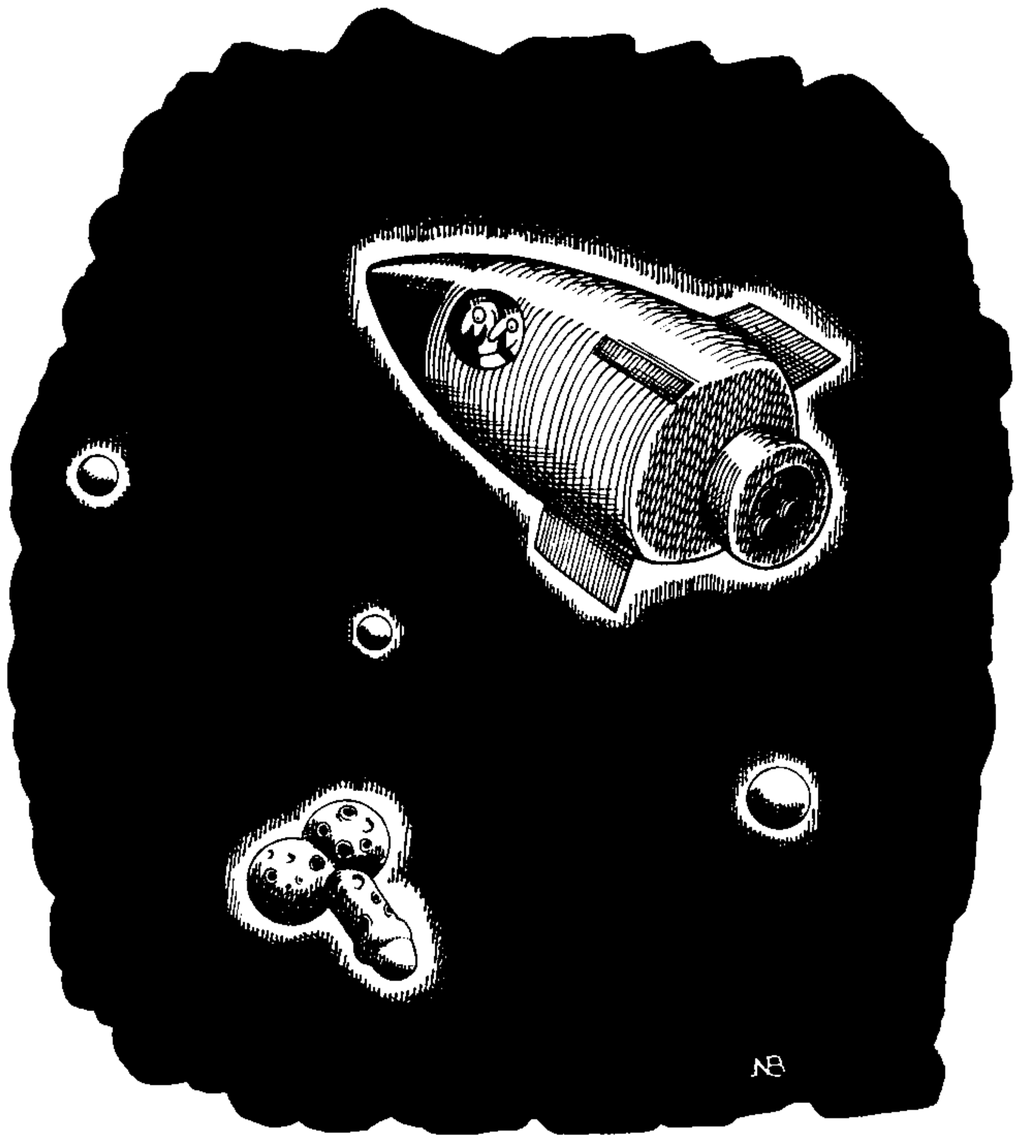


BUSH REELS AT POLL SHOCKER

Those New Dworkin Primary results in full

G. Bush (President)	82%
Gary Taramasalata (Democrat)	66%
Governor Rory P. Legover Jr (Democrat)	46%
K.K. Klansman (Republican)	42%
Mrs Barbara Bush (write-in)	103%
Governor Mario Cuomo (Mafioso Democrat)	24%
Hiram J. Corncircle III (Independent Democrat)	16%
Mayor Moses T. Terminator II (Democrat)	8%
Congressman Wilbur Q. Clipboard (Anti-Smoking and Human Rights Party)	4%
Buck Havaniceday (Human Beings For President)	0%

That's enough candidates. Ed.



"Waa-hey! It IS a phallocentric universe"

An Irish Doctor writes

As a doctor I am often asked by pregnant rape victims: "Can I have an abortion?"

The simple answer is "No".

If you have any problems, you should consult the Attorney General immediately.

© *An Irish Doctor*

100 things you can buy for £1

92. Thirty-six magnetic letters at John Lewis. 99p.
93. Thirty-seven magnetic numbers at John Lewis. 99p.

Standard

TO THE DIRTY TELEGRAPH

SIR—As a leading member of the sado-masochistic gay community, I would like to register the strongest possible protest at the decision of the Appeal Court to uphold the conviction of one of our members in the case of Regina vs S.M & Others.

As a result of this transvesty of justice, I and several like-minded persons plan to nail ourselves to the door of 10 Downing Street and encourage the police to beat us up and trample us to within an inch of our lives with their strong, majestic horses.

Sympathisers who wish to join the demonstration are advised to dress informally (black leather g-string and studded collar) and arrive at Downing Street no later than 10.69am on the morning of March 3rd.

THE MARQUIS DE GUSSETT,
Full name, address and photographs supplied,
c/o Punch Me Magazine,
Blackleatherfriars Bridge,
London.

NEW FORENSIC EVIDENCE CLEARS WADDINGTON ONE

by Our Legal Staff
Lunchtime O'Noose

YESTERDAY the legal world was woken up *(shurely 'shocked to its foundations'? Ed)* **by extraordinary new evidence that proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that Lord Waddington, the convicted former lawyer, serial MP, Home Secretary and current Leader of the House of Lords, could never conceivably have been any of these things.**

A brain scan in 1967 revealed no mental activity whatsoever in Waddington's cranium.

Had this fact been known at the time, it is almost certain that he would never have held any of these public positions. He would have been Prime Minister.

A spokesman for Mr Waddington said: "David has shown considerable dignity in calling for innocent people to be strung up. He should now be left alone to live out the rest of his life in a padded room in the House of Lords."

Modern Miracles No. 94

The Holy Spring of Saunders

In 1992 there occurred the only known case of spontaneous recovery from Alzheimer's Disease. An elderly man believed to be near death drank of the waters at the fountain of Ford Open Prison in Sussex. Immediately he recovered all his former powers. A day later he was playing tennis and making plans to start a car-phone business called Out of the Cellnet plc. Warders were amazed when the man they called "The Living Corpse" walked unaided from the prison, laughing heartily and completing the *Times* crossword in less than a minute.

As a result, hundreds of inform pilgrims now flock to the Holy Spring to sip the waters but so far, disappointingly, no one else has been cured at all.

JUDGE DREDDFUL
AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY FRAUD IS RIFE IN THE TEEMING MEGACITY. NO-ONE CAN BE TRUSTED....
OPEN UP! FRAUD SQUAD!
REALLY?
NO! HA! HA! HA!
ONLY JUDGE DREDDFUL STANDS BETWEEN ORDER AND ANARCHY, FRAUDSTERS IN THE SUPREME COURT.....
I'M WARNING YOU — YOU'RE LOOKING AT 2 YEARS MINIMUM!
THE SENTENCE?
NO — THE TRIAL!
DREDDFUL
OH NO! IT'S THE LONG DRAWN-OUT ARM OF THE LAW!
IF I COULD REFER YOUR JUDGESHIP TO THE DOCUMENT MARKED 7(c)iii IN THE PINK FOLDER IN BUNDLE 'A' RELATING TO THE 1948 COMPANIES' ACT AMENDMENT 58....
SO MUCH FOR THE BRIEF!
SILENCE IN COURT! SOME OF US ARE TRYING TO GET SOME SLEEP!
MUCH, MUCH, LATER....
WE'RE VERY CONFUSED, YOUR HONOUR
WELL, IT WAS A VERY COMPLEX CASE...
NO, WE'RE CONFUSED AS TO WHY YOU'VE LET THESE CROOKS OFF!
4 MAN
JURY
I HAD TO! YOU SEE, THEY APPEALED — NICE ACCENTS, WELL DRESSED, SHORT HAIR — OBVIOUSLY WENT TO PUBLIC SCHOOL....
JUDGE DREDDFUL SUMS UP....
IT'S ASKING A LOT OF MERE LAYMEN TO COMPREHEND A CASE SUCH AS THIS...
NO, IT'S PERFECTLY CLEAR TO US — IT'S ALL ABOUT A LOT OF MONEY DISAPPEARING OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME INTO THE HANDS OF UNSCRUPULOUS PROFESSIONALS!
4 MAN
YOU! BLOODY LAWYERS!!
MORAL: LAWS ARE MADE TO BE BROKEN, BUT LAWYERS ARE NOT MADE TO BE BROKE!

EYE FORUM

by Brian Farmyard

Animal Genocide or our English way of life?

AGAINST

Dave Spart, Co-Chair of the Neasden Action League Against Vertebrate Holocaust.

Er, once again the British Establishment closes ranks to defend the totally sickening so-called sport of fox-hunting, i.e. a group of rich, upper-class sadists marauding around the countryside in order to murder and torture a totally innocent and defenceless animal, i.e. a fox, so that they can glory in the sight of its guts being ripped out by trained killer-dogs who have been deliberately starved for weeks to turn them into killing machines capable of chewing off a toddler's arm... er... it is totally sickening. As the great homosexual rights activist Oscar Wilde so profoundly put it: "Hunting is the totally sickening in full pursuit of the totally unacceptable."

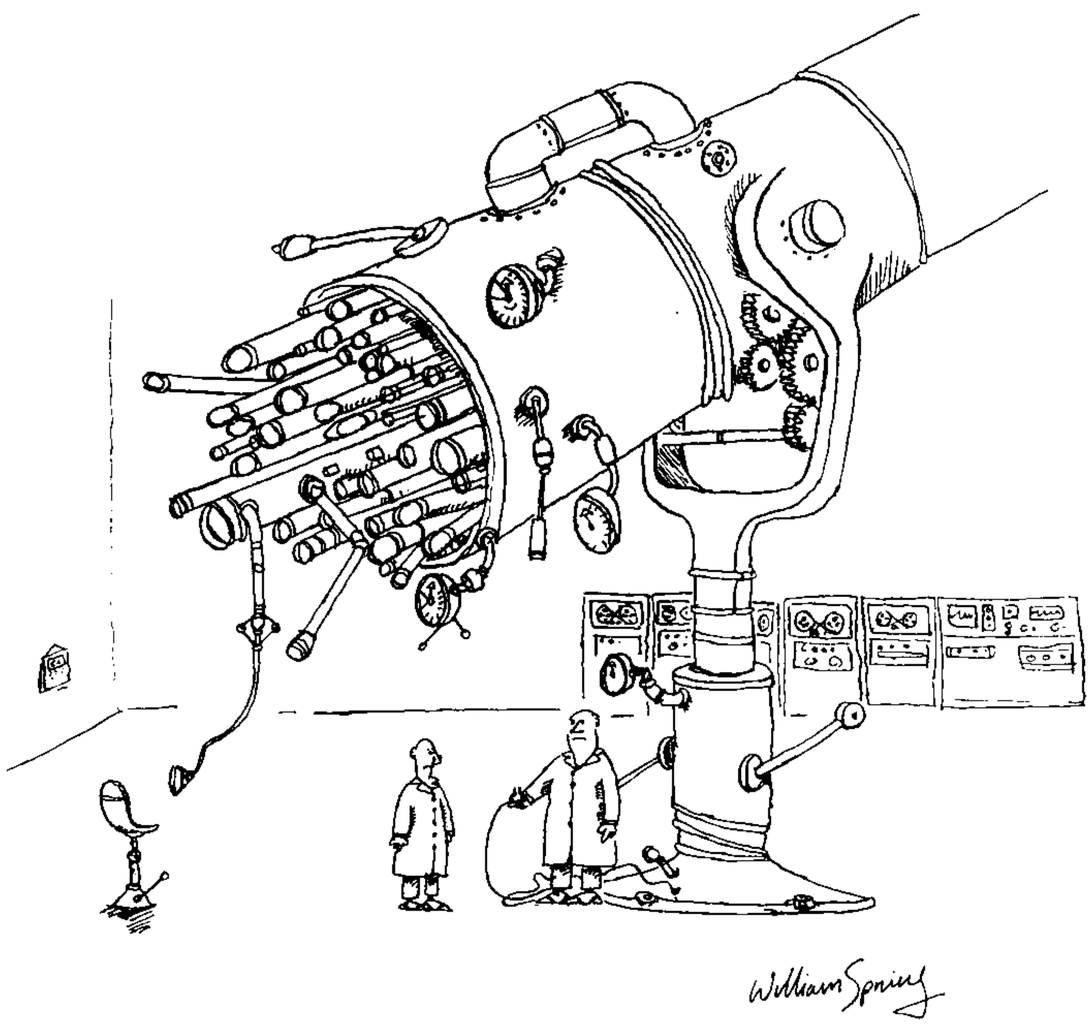
FOR

John Nortiboys QC, playwright, barrister, bon viveur and bon voyage round my father.

Hullo. As a life-long socialist, there is nothing I find more agreeable than to stand in an Oxfordshire lane on a crisp November morning and to hear coming across the frost-encrusted fields from some distant spinney, the age-old call of the huntsman: "John, you're wanted on the phone. You can take it in my Range Rover." Oh, how thrilling, as I gallop across to the car to hear the unmistakable bark of my old friend Baroness Mallalieu inviting Penny and me over to lunch at her place, to discuss these dreadful long-haired hunt saboteurs who are trying to destroy forever the England of John Peel, John Betjeman and John Mortimer.

How the celebrities line up on the most important issue confronting humanity today

FOR	AGAINST
Barbara Cartland	Sir Nedward Sherrin
Count Nikolai Tolstoy	Sir Yehudi Menuhin
Cliff Richard	Melvyn Bragg
TV's Charles Moore	Jason Donovan
Trevor Macdonald	Robin Cook MP
Will Carling	Jane Torvill
Norman Stone	Maureen Lipman
Roger Scruton	Anita Roddick
Rod Stewart	Stephen Fry
Rod Hull and Emu	Barry Cryer
Norman Willis	Norman Willis
Barry Cryer	Rod Hull and Emu
Stephen Fry	Rod Stewart
Anita Roddick	Roger Scruton
Maureen Lipman	Norman Stone
Jane Torvill	Will Carling
Robin Cook MP	Trevor Macdonald
Jason Donovan	TV's Charles Moore
Melvyn Bragg	Cliff Richard
Sir Yehudi Menuhin	Count Nikolai Tolstoy
Sir Nedward Sherrin	Barbara Cartland



"I can never remember — is it blue live and brown neutral, or the other way around?"

Daily Mail
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1992
30p

DYING JOHN SMITH BEATEN UP BY LABOUR COLLEAGUES IN WESTMINISTER TEA ROOM

Smith: Vote Conservative

By SIR DAVID FESTER

IN ONE of the most extraordinary incidents that has ever taken place in the imagination of the editor *(shurely 'Houses of Parliament'? Ed.)* **a desperately ill John Smith was savagely attacked over a cup of tea by hundreds of fellow Labour MPs, including Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley and John Cunningham.**

The reason for the unprovoked assault on the failing Shadow Chancellor by the armed gang is believed to be Labour's desperation at finding themselves a dismal four per cent ahead in the latest polls *(shurely shome mishtake? Ed)* and Labour MPs' clear belief that the soon-to-be-late John Smith is personally responsible for all of their current woes.

Smith, despite reports of being 100 per cent fit, is known by *Daily Mail* doctors to be suffering from a terminal disease which could well mean his death before the General Election. This would leave Labour without a Chancellor, and political commentators on the *Daily Mail* believe Labour's first-choice replacement would inevitably be Arthur Scargill or Martin Jacques, the former editor of *Marxism Today*.

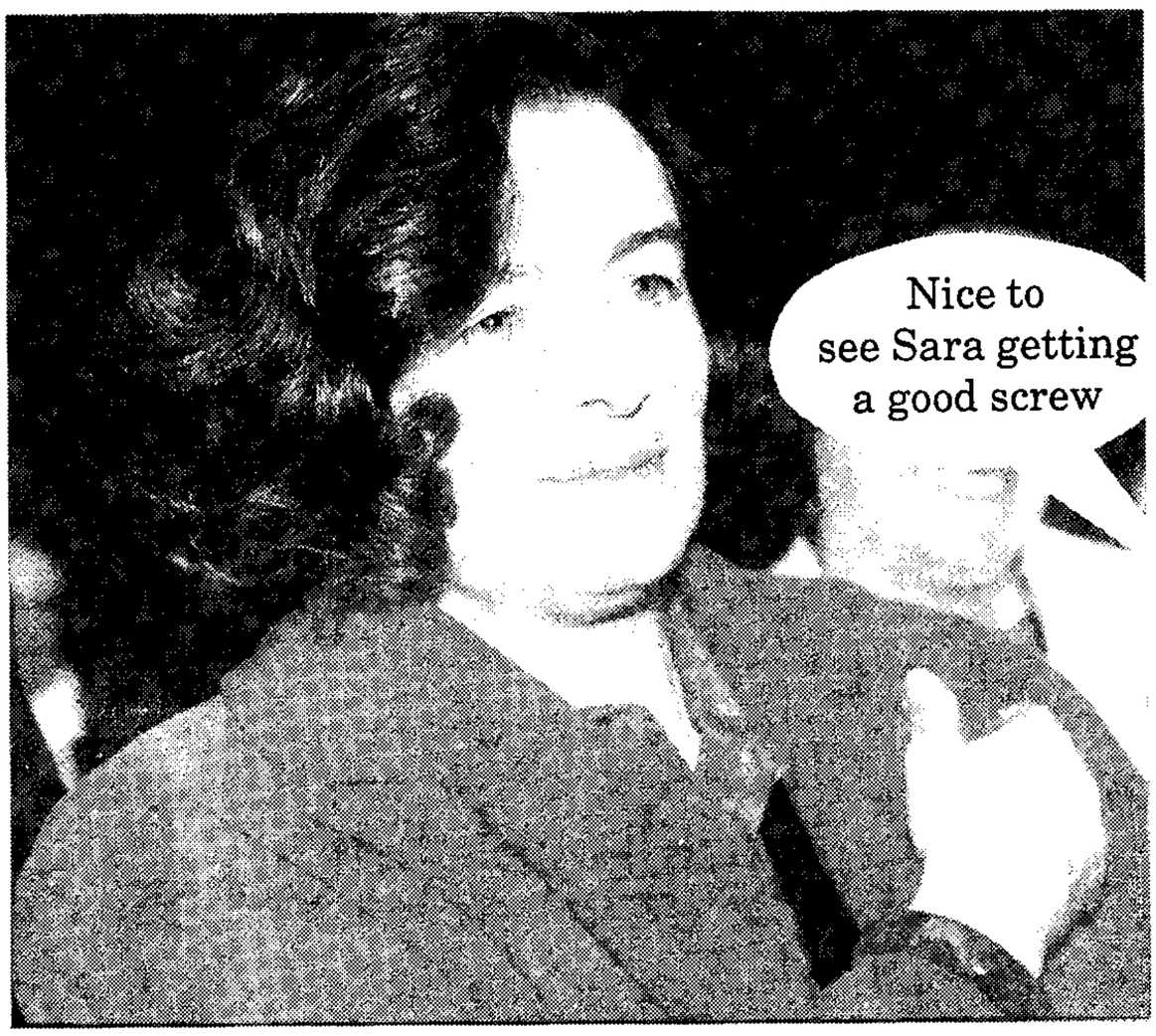
No wonder the extremists of the party, such as Kinnock and Hattersley, tried to murder the moderate John Smith in the sanctuary of the House of Commons, so that they could hasten the installation of their own loony-left candidate to ruin the economy and hasten the onset of totalitarian Marxist-Leninism in Britain.

It is a sign of their desperation that *(contd p. 94)*

ON OTHER PAGES

Labour MPs refuse to curtsey to the Queen 3
Why Stephanie's kidnapper votes Labour 5
Should Robin Cook face the death penalty? 7
Maxwell "committed suicide at thought of Labour victory" 9
Unfunny cartoon by Mahood 11

£105,000 SHOCK



In The Courts

In The Case of The Crown v. Sealink

Day 962

MR ROGER SEALINK *(representing himself):* My Lord, I now come to the important question of my own health.

(Takes out large bottle of tablets labelled FOR VERY ILL PEOPLE — 2 TO BE TAKEN IN FRONT OF JUDGE)

When it comes to the charge that on 17 May 1986 I did knowingly and fraudulently seek to steal the sum of £75 billion from the shareholders of Alzheimer's Lager plc, I would ask you, My Lord, to refer to this large elephant.

JUDGE: Surely, Mr See-through, you mean 'Bundle B'?

SEALINK: Of course, Your Honour, I had a momentary fruitcake, due to my state of health.

(Puts on straitjacket labelled TO BE WORN IN COURT BY THOSE UNDER VERY SEVERE MENTAL STRESS)

COCKLECARROT: Are you alright, Mr Sealink?

DEFENDANT: No, My Lord, I assure you I am perfectly able to eat my trousers, should the need arise.

COCKLECARROT: Oh, you poor chap. You remind me of a chap I was at school with. Sealink Minor. I wonder what happened to him?

SEALINK: I'll come to that later, Your Worship. Meanwhile, I would ask the jury to turn to page 412 of Bundle Z.

(Jury wearily turn pages of enormous files)

SEALINK: Now, members of the jury, could you look carefully at Para D, subsection (iiia). Now, raise your hands in the air and sing all together, The Shrimp Boats Are A-Comin' In.

COCKLECARROT: I remember that one. A lovely old song.

SIR HARTLEY REDFACE QC *(for the Crown):* My Lord, I really must wake up at this point to ask Your Lordship what relevance this song about shrimp boats has to the events on 12th June 1973 when the defendant was seen emerging from the offices of Alzheimer's Lager carrying several suitcases bulging with used £20 notes.

JUDGE: Really, Sir Hartley? It is most tactless of you to remind Mr Sealink of these distressing matters, which took place a very long time ago and which have clearly imposed an intolerable strain on this unhappy gentleman.

SEALINK *(from dock):* Holy caterpillars, Batman, I think it's working!

(Takes out copy of Punch magazine and begins to laugh. Gasps in courtroom at this clear sign of total insanity)

COCKLECARROT: Oh dear, oh dear. This cannot continue. It must be clear to everyone who has been sitting in this court for the last five years that Mr Sealink has suffered enough. It has plainly been all too much for him, having to sit here day after day listening to all these unfortunate allegations that he may in some way have been guilty of these very grave crimes alleged against him by the Serious Fraud Office. I can only conclude that Mr Sealink is far too ill to be subjected to any further prolongation of what must have been, for him, a terrible ordeal. I therefore sentence him to a six-month holiday in the tropical paradise of his choice, where I hope he will soon recover his health and enjoy all the happiness that money can bring.

(Takes out onion as violins begin to play)

DEFENDANT: My Lord, I feel completely better already.

(Throws away pills and straitjacket and dons Bermuda shorts bearing the slogan BRITISH JUSTICE IS WONDERFUL)

(Not to be continued)

"I could've been a somebody"

Winter Olympics results

Cross-Country Skating — Men's 4x400 miles

Gold: Findus Fishfingers *(Finland)*
Silver: Conrad Moosejaw *(Canada)*
Bronze: Dolmio Tomato *(Italy)*

Synchronised Ice-Jumping (Men's)

Gold: Bjorn Free *(Sweden)*
Silver: Bjorn Yesterday *(Denmark)*
Bronze: Juan Bjorn Everiminute *(Spain)*

Indoor Freestyle Bobsleigh Dancing (Men's)

Gold: Yurin Samplov *(former Soviet Union)*
Silver: Ingrid Steroid *(formerly an East German woman)*
Bronze: Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards *(formerly famous)*

Women's Downhill Volleyball

Gold: Karen Daterape *(USA)*
Silver: Omega Stopwatch *(Czechoslovakia)*
Bronze: Vanilla Haagen-Dazs *(Holland)*

Mixed Speed Snowman Building (new event)

Gold: Frei and Lørie *(Norway)*
Silver: Toksvig and McShane *(Canada)*
Bronze: Anderson and Andandersonson *(Iceland)*

(That's enough Winter Olympics. Ed.)

POETRY CORNER

Lines on the 20th Anniversary of The Cosmopolitan Magazine

So. Congratulations then
Cosmopolitan.

"How to have an
Orgasm
In Two Minutes."

That was your
Catchphrase.

"Do Sun Lamps
Give You
Cancer?"

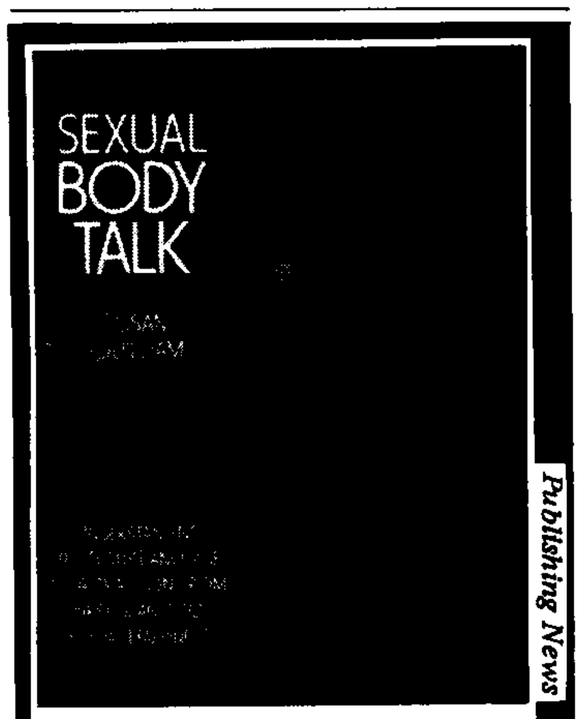
That was another.

Now you are
Twenty.

Nearly as
Young as
Your readers.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

HEATH



Professor John Malins
David & Charles 0 7153 9899 7
£20.00
An indispensable companion to all gardeners who wish to create a beautiful garden full of handsome, healthy and productive plants.

Great Bores Of Today.

"... I don't think much of the current lot I mean Major's very lightweight and they've made a terrible hash of things recently you know the Health Service and Education and what about the trains? the only idea they've got is to try and bribe us all with tax cuts that simply won't wash this isn't the eighties any more no they're going to have to do better than that mind you what about the other lot? if it was John Smith it would be different but Kinnock really isn't up to it on financial matters he *really* is awfully weak and he's never held office and *his* idea is to make everyone pay more tax well that's not very bright is it? Ashdown's the same he says he's going to put up taxes as well they don't realise that there's more to politics than how much money is in people's pockets no I'll be voting for Major not because of any tax cuts because I don't let that sort of thing influence me but a few bob would come in handy given the recession..."

Celeb

LIGGER

LET'S HAVE A COUPLE MORE REALLY BIG PUSHES AND IF HE STILL WON'T BUDGE WE'LL TRY FORCEPS.
HE DOESN'T SEEM TO WANT TO COME OUT FOR SOME REASON.
I SEE.
SO WE MAY HAVE TO GIVE HIM A HAND.
OH RIGHT.
BA-BY.
BA-BY.
BA-BY.
BA-BY.
CLAP
CLAP
STAMP

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

Today I had a visit from an American man called Mr Quayle. He said he was a friend of Mr Bush and wanted to talk to me about GATT, which I naturally assumed was a kind of life assurance. I told Mr Quayle that I already had a very good policy with the Prudent & Provident Society, a considerably respected firm offering a wide range of benefits on retirement. Not that I am thinking of retiring. Oh no. But American salesmen can be very persuasive and I ended up signing a piece of paper just to get rid of him.

Tuesday

Mr Hurd tells me that my meeting with Mr Quayle yesterday was a diplomatic triumph. All the newspapers from the Daily Mail to the Daily Telegraph carried the headline MAJOR'S TOUGH TALK WINS OVER BUSH ENVOY. GATT AGREEMENT IN SIGHT. Oh yes.

I was enjoying in no small measure my lunch, consisting of a Marks & Spencer Kiwi Fruit and Tuna On Wholemeal Granary Bread Sandwich, when I heard on the one o'clock news an announcement that the German economy was in recession. I at once rang up my friend Helmut Kohl to express my sympathy for this terrible news. He was so distraught that he could not remember who I was. Just then, my friend Chris ran in, shouting: "Great news about the Germans, John. Their economy is up the spout. That means they're in recession just like us." "What on earth do you mean?" I asked. "Our recession ended at the end of last year. Norma Lamont said so. You really must pay attention, Chris, or we will not win the election." He gave me one of his funny looks.

Wednesday

Today in Cabinet everyone seemed to be excited about a secret weapon to win the election. When I asked what it was, my friend Mr Mellor said: "John, it's got everything we're looking for — a man with charisma, leadership and great powers of oratory. He will knock Kinnock for six." "Really, David," I said, "there is no need to flatter me. I'm not Mrs Thatcher, you know." They all laughed at my joke. But then Mr Heseltine ruined it by standing up and saying: "OK, gentlemen, I'll do it for the sake of the party." They all clapped.

Thursday

Today I had another great success over Mr Kinnock in the House of Commons. Mr Kinnock asked me whether I would condemn the increase in the long-term unemployed. I leaped to my feet, holding my special grey ring-pull folder from Rymans, and said, off the top of my head, without even looking at my notes: "Yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir." Even the Labour Party cheered at this brilliant reply.

Then it was Mr Heseltine's turn, but I am sorry to say he did not do too well. In point of fact, our side was so disappointed they stood up shouting and waving their order papers for several minutes.

Friday

Norma Lamont has come up with a brilliant idea for winning the election. At a special top-level strategy meeting this morning he told us that he could ensure victory at the polls by a single stroke. "We'll give away billions of pounds in tax cuts," he said.

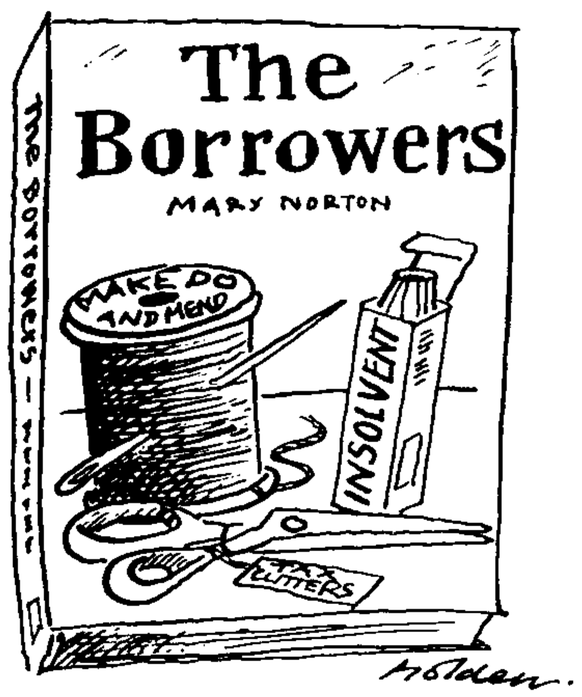
"But Norma," I cautioned, "you told me we hadn't got any money to give away."

"No problem, Prime Minister," he replied. "We'll borrow it."

Why did Mrs Thatcher never think of something as clever as this? I bet she wishes she'd had a Chancellor as clever as mine.

Saturday

Today I travelled north to Scotland which is a by no means inconsiderable distance from London in my judgement. Apparently there are lots of people in Scotland who think they are in a different country. This is nonsense, as I saw with my own eyes. When



we crossed the border we were completely unaware that we had so done. There were no guards, no wall, no passport control and no duty free, as Norma Lamont pointed out.

I made this observation to a gathering of all the Conservatives in Scotland — well over 212 people, all crammed into the hall my friend Chris has hired. It was a great success and many of them stayed right to the end.

Monday

Today is another red-letter occasion in the run-up to the General Election. I have decided to introduce a Freedom of Information Charter. However, I was furious to read about this in the newspapers. Who told them? It really is pretty disgraceful that you can't keep anything secret these days. I will have to introduce a new Secrecy Charter to prevent this sort of thing happening again. NB: I have written this entry in invisible ink.

PETER McLIE

The World's Worst Columnist *

HAVE YOU noticed that Fergie has been visiting the pyramids? Yet another free trip abroad for our supposedly impoverished Duchess.

Pity the poor Egyptians who have to put up with her temper tantrums as she suns herself on the banks of the Nile!

☐ *I FIND myself increasingly tired of reading items about Fergie in all our newspaper columns.*

Surely they could find something better to write about, these poor deluded boobies — like how terrible the television programmes are nowadays.

☐ **HAVE YOU been watching the television recently? It's rubbish, isn't it?**

Did you see that programme the other day, for example? Terrible, wasn't it?

It was so bad I can't even remember what it was about.

Fergie, probably!

☐ HAVE YOU noticed how it seems to be getting lighter in the evenings?

When I leave the office at half past four, after lunch, it is still bright.

Curious, isn't it? Perhaps it has something to do with the coming General Election.

(You're fired. Ed.)

**Winner of the What The Papers Say World's Worst Columnist 1991 award*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY HELLOGRAPH

From Sir Herbert Gussett

SIR:— It was with interest that we down here in Somerset read the article taking the whole of your front page reporting the "launch" of a new journal, *The Oldie*. I understand from your "media correspondent" Miss Thynne that in metropolitan circles there has been no other topic of conversation for several weeks.

Nevertheless I have to tell you that despite frequent request to our local newsagent, Mr Chauduri, no copies of this periodical are to be obtained anywhere within 20 miles of this village. It was to remedy this sad deficiency that last night in the Lamb and Flag hostelry an ad hoc editorial board was elected, to provide local readers with their own version of this estimable organ, under the title of *The Oldie, Incorporating the Parish Newsletter*:

Editor-in-Chief: H. Gussett.

Deputy-Editor and General Features: B. Frobisher.

Circulation manager and Hospitality: M. Balon.

Church News and Sports Editor: Rev. Purvis.

In no time at all, we had drawn up a suggested list of articles suitable for inclusion in the inaugural issue, to be published in the autumn of 1993.

These were as follows:

My Memories Of Life In The Home-Guard 1940-1 (10,000 words approx) by Sir H. Gussett, to be illustrated with photographs from the author's collection.

My Holiday in Devon in 1938 by B. Frobisher.

Why Oh Why We Need £5,000 To Repair The Organ by Rev. Purvis.

Plus Full Results of School Sports, Details of Church Services and Opening Times of Local Hostelries (Lamb and Flag) all in our special listings section.

The first issue, sure to become a collector's item, is to be jointly-sponsored by the Lamb and Flag Public House and Brewster's Service Station on the B2439 ("Wheel Aim To Do Your Repairs The Way You Want 'Em!")

I trust, sir, that the above summary is sufficient to alert your readers to the feast of journalistic endeavour that is springing up in even the quietest backwaters of our "green and pleasant land" under the inspiration of this new magazine *The Oldie.*

Yours faithfully
H. GUSSETT
The Oldie Rectory
Lycett Green
Wilts.

TOP TEN BORES

This Week		Last Week	Weeks On List
1	David Coleridge	7	1,207
2	Michael Jackson	–	–
3	Nicholas Witchell	–	–
4	Edward Fox	8	37
5	Lord Dacre of Glanton	4	78
6	Sir Bernard Ingham	7	143
7	Ivor Stanbrook MP	5	232
8	Jane Fonda	–	–
9	Paul Tsongas	–	–
10	Noddy	10	784

This week's Bore compiled in association with *HighLife* Magazine.

A Taxi Driver writes

Every week a well-known member of the taxi-driving community is asked to give his views on a matter of topical interest.

This week: **SID SNOZZER** (Cab No. 3741)

Blimey, what's the world coming to? Giving us cabbies a bad name. What was it, three rapes in four days... piss off, mate, can't you see this is a bus lane... mind you, he couldn't have been a real black-cab driver, more like a black driving a cab, know what I mean, guv? There's a mini-cab, you can tell by the aerials... come on, piss off... anyway, you know what they should do with this bloke? String 'im up, it's the only language they understand. I had this bird in the back of the cab once...

NEXT WEEK: Hughie Massingberd (Cab No. 342)

"It's a lifestyle magazine for the dead"

HEIR OF SORROWS

BY

SYLVIE KRIN

THE STORY SO FAR: Charles and Diana are touring India.

Now read on...

DIANA looked out through the arched Palomas of the State Room of the former Winter Palace of the Maharajah of Asda (now the New Delhi International Hotel). Below her teemed Mother India in all her myriad forms and colourful splendour. There underneath the delicate fronds of the Mazzawattee tree roamed sacred goats mingling with the half-clad rickshawmen; there was a temple elephant crowned with an ornate howzatt in which sat an orange-robed holy monk on his way to prayer at the sacred shrine of the Goddess Viz; snake charmers played on the Bhag pipes watched by curious American tourists and emaciated beggars wide-eyed with *(Get on with it, Ed.)*

Charles had just finished his breakfast and was unpacking his tropical safari suit from Simpson and Galton, complete with a solar toupee given to him by his father with the somewhat unkind message pencilled in the brim: "Keep out of the sun, boy, you're mad enough already."

"It's amazing, isn't it? I mean it's so different from Windsor or somewhere like that. This is a spiritual place, Diana, it's not materialistic... you know — Madonna and that sort of thing..."

He paused as he joined his young wife at the window and pointed to an elderly fakir floating six inches above the ground and swallowing a bejewelled sword.

"You see it's all transcendental here, what Sir Laurens calls 'The Third Eye'. D'you remember that book I gave you for your 29th birthday where he explains how we all have two eyes but there is another one, sort of in your forehead, if only you could see it... er..."

"Is that why some of them have those red spots?" she enquired.

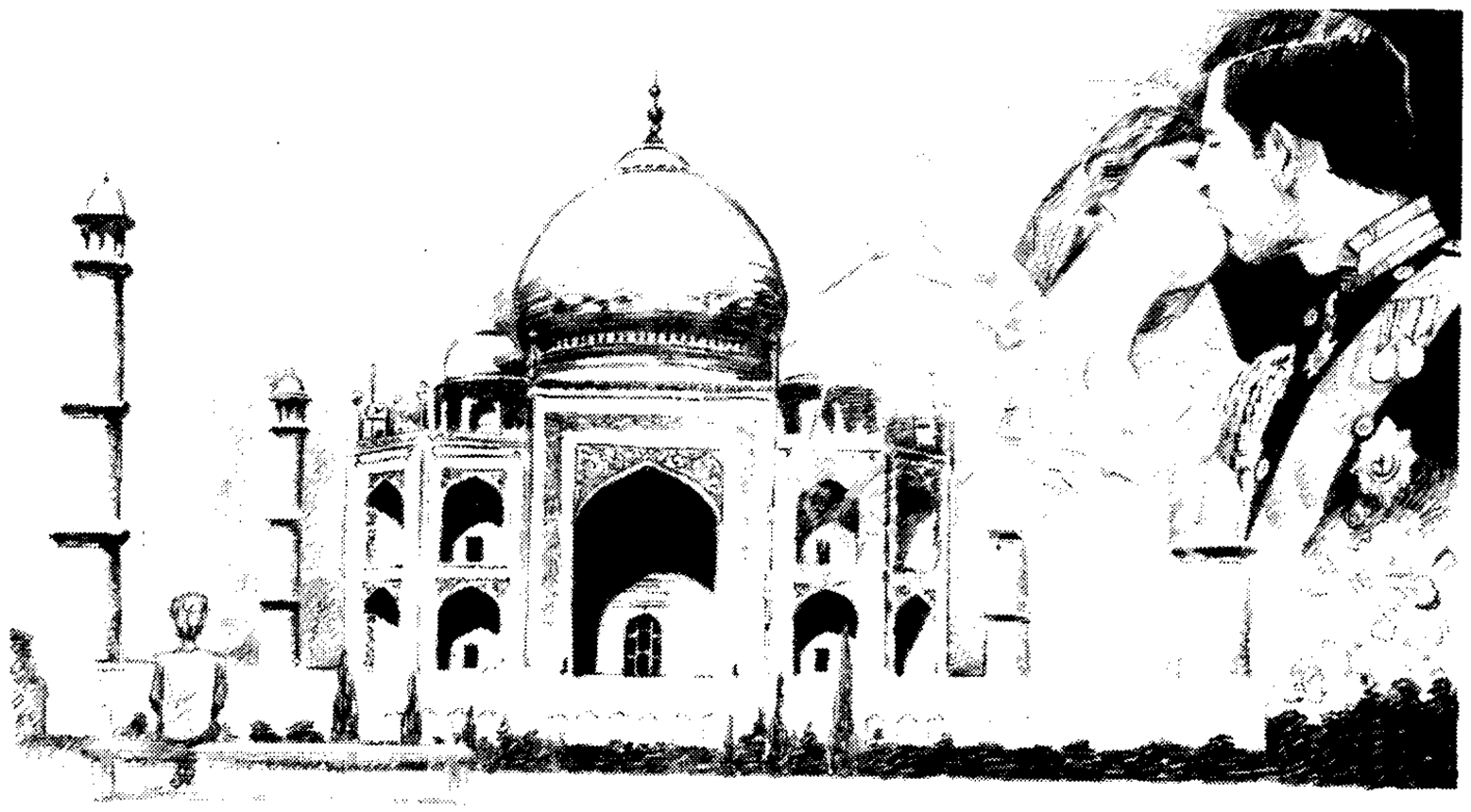
Charles thought for a minute.

"Quite possibly, yes." Diana was definitely sort of coming on in a metaphysical sense. "One always has to have one painted on one before one goes into a temple thingie... er..."

There was a discreet cough which preceded the entrance of Sir Quintin de Crispin, Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to the Court of New Delhi.

"Ahem," he began, "I have Your Majesties' itinerary if you would just like to check it through. Today you, sir, will speak at the Anglo Indian Chemical Warfare Trade Fair. That's just before lunch with senior representatives of the Uttar Pradesh Computer Software Delegation. There are a lot of openings for our people there..."

As he continued listing the series of engagements, Diana's attention began to wander and her pale blue eyes strayed out of the window to the glistening white marble minarets in the distance.



"... and then you will plant a rumpole tree outside the New Delhi Happy Eater complex — we're very proud of that one, Sir. It's the only place you can get a good Danish pastry anywhere in the subcontinent. Following that, just to charge up the spiritual batteries" — he gave a little laugh — "you both visit the Taj Mahal."

Charles frowned.

"Really! Oh! But I've been there before, when I came last time."

"But *I* haven't", Diana quickly interjected. "I really want to see it. I mean everyone else has seen it. It's supposed to be really great."

Sir Crispin nodded diplomatically. "If you'll permit me, Madam, I will place a car at your disposal, while your husband is otherwise engaged opening the New Calcutta Sewerage Plant. I'm sure it won't disappoint you."

The Taj Mahal, Diana thought... The Palace of Love...

"IT IS called the Palace of Love." The man who sat beside her on the ornate marble embonpoint pointed to the exquisitely proportioned outline of one of the world's seven wonders.

"Allow me to introduce myself, Miss. My name is Mr Patel — I am but a humble tobacconist and newsagent — a visitor like yourself. Is this not the most beautiful and most wonderful vision your eyes have ever feasted upon?"

"Yah. Yah."

Diana followed her new friend as he led her along the narrow stretch of water which glistened like so many diamonds under the full moon. Magnificent tigerfish darted beneath the lotus leaves. Proudly plumed peacocks swam gracefully under the gently cascading fountains.

"It is a beautiful story," Mr Patel explained as they crossed the willow bridge into the celebrated Garden of Karma. "Many long years ago, a handsome prince fell in love with a beautiful young girl. He loved her so much that he built for her this palace where we now stand. For him it was to be a symbol of their eternal togetherness. And today married couples come from all over the world to celebrate their union, one with another."

Diana sat down on the simple stone bench, listening to the soft tinkling of the fountain. The words of her guide reverberated in her head — "Married couples come here... eternal togetherness... the Temple of Love..."

A tear welled up and coursed slowly down her perfectly formed cheek. She looked round for her guide. But he was gone.

(To be continued)

The Diary will be back in the next issue

Literary Review

Kop out

The Faber Book of Soccer
Ian Hamilton (Ed.)
(Faber & Faber, £14.99)

THE FINE old game of association football rides intermittent waves of fashion. Any *thirtysomething* who ever kicked a tennis ball around a municipal park in childhood and now, fat and wistful, sets the VCR to record the Liverpool match, will know them well.

A great rush of interest started at the time of the 1966 World Cup victory and extended well past the 1970 quarter final defeat. There was the mid- to late '70s indifference prompted by the abject performances of the national side; partial resuscitation in the '80s, usually coinciding with phenomena such as crowd violence and Euro-bans; and then a renewed and continuing spurt of trendiness impelled by 1990's events in Rome.

The persons responsible for this upward and downward shift are nearly always journalists — not, as it happens, the sportswriters who report the games, oh dear me no, but media types of the wannabe or could have been variety. Several of them, notably Blake Morrison and Sebastian Faulks, appear here. Nothing wrong with their contributions — in fact, Morrison's account of his teenage obsession with Burnley is an affecting lament for a career that might have been, and there cannot be many literary editors who turned down the chance to sign schoolboy forms for Preston North End. It is simply that together they point unerringly in the direction of *The Faber Book of Soccer*'s signal failings: its partiality, its post-1966 bias and its almost complete lack of interest in the perspectives of the people who watch, administer and play the game.

A faint whiff of perfunctoriness is hardly driven away by Ian Hamilton's introduction, with its remarks about "a sport without much of a literature" and a complaint about "the few pieces of worthwhile soccer fiction I have been able to locate". As examples of these Hamilton includes extracts from G.M. Williams's *From Scenes Like These*, which was on the first Booker shortlist, James Kelman and a snippet from *London Fields*. But he ignores altogether the great classics of the genre: Brian Glanville's *Goalkeepers Are Crazy* and Bill Naughton's *The Goalkeeper's Revenge*. The literature in which soccer acts as an emotive background to broader personal conflicts — Alan Sillitoe's story "The Match", even Wodehouse's *Psmith In The City*, in which Psmith conciliates his boss by affecting to support Manchester United, are ignored; and you will look through all the 330 or so pages of the present volume without finding any mention of J.L. Carr's *How Steeple Sinderby Wanderers Won The F.A. Cup*, the finest football novel ever written, in which the village side really does get to Wembley.

You will also look in vain for very much of a contribution from the people who do the work — that is, the footballers themselves. Now professional footballers are a notoriously inarticulate breed — a cause of understandable amusement to some of the contributors — but the number of players allowed breathing space here is limited to one: Eamon Dunphy, the old Manchester United and Millwall defender. Surely among all the footballers' autobiographies Hamilton could have found one — Billy Wright's *Football Is My Passport*, say — to provide a view from beneath the terraces. The famous chapter in Len Shackleton's memoirs, headed "What The Average Director Knows About The Game", would have been worth reprinting too as a comment on the current plotting of the soccer barons: Shackleton left the page blank.

This isn't a bad anthology, by any means. You get Arthur Hopcraft on Bobby Charlton and Hugh McIlvanney's account of the '66 World Cup final (which ought to be sellotaped to the shaving mirror of anyone who thinks Gascoigne, Lineker *et al* are the equivalent of Ramsey's legendary monsters).

More recently, there is Dave Hill on soccer racism and Pete Davies questioning Robson's heroes. Nothing from the fanzines, though, except some snooty introductory remarks about their language being "more like a Vinnie Jones late tackle than a John Barnes pirouette". But the general view is of a game little more than a quarter of a century old, played by a handful of clubs with names like Liverpool, Arsenal and Spurs and watched by a few celebrity journalists. On reflection, though, you can hardly blame Hamilton for taking this view: it's remarkably similar to the one taken by the game's administrators.

Books & Bookmen

☐ AS PREDICTED in the last *Eye*, US publishers Little Brown have become Big Brown by acquiring from administrators Price Waterhouse more of Cap'n Bob's Macdonald than warier publishers were prepared to bid. A price of £30 million has been mentioned, but the figure to be paid by the Americans is likely to be nearer half that.

It remains to be seen which authors whose contracts allow them to depart will decide to remain with the firm. Dame Philippa Harrison and her enthusiastic staff should continue to be in employment, and back royalties should soon be paid.

In spite of venerable and boring reference publisher Harrap going into receivership, this has been the most positive fortnight in British publishing for a few years. Skinny Cheetham has agreed to hire more refugees from Random Century, and Orion becomes more ambitious by the hour. Carlton Communications, which was awarded the Thames Television franchise, has set up a substantial new publishing subsidiary, Carlton Books, under Jonathan Goodman, late of Octopus.

Editors continue to drift or sneak away from HarperCollins, the most recent being Paladin's editorial director, Ian Paten, which may be connected with the fact that these days one is hardpressed to find Paladin books in the shops.

■ *CONGRATULATIONS are due to 29-year-old Tony Maher, who has been appointed manager of the Dillons bookshop in Birmingham.*

This is no small achievement, for the Birmingham branch will soon be the second biggest Dillons store in the whole country. By an extraordinary coincidence, young Maher is the son of Terry Maher, chairman of the Pentos Group — which just happens to own Dillons!

☐ *HOLLYWOOD Angers Poet Laureate Over Wife's Suicide* was the main headline on the *Sunday Times*'s front page two weeks ago. It reported protests by Ted Hughes's family at a film about his former wife Sylvia Plath, which is to be based on a biography by the American writer Paul Alexander.

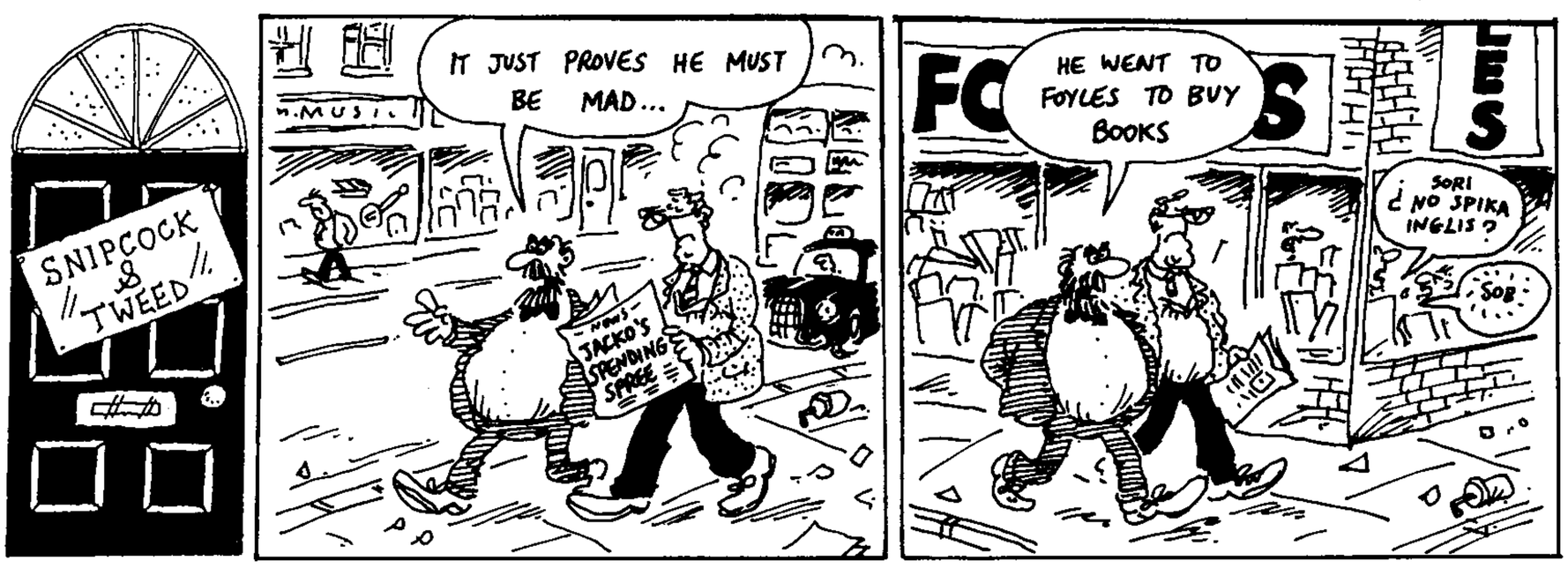
The article, in turn, provoked plenty of anger. For it quoted Olwyn Hughes, the poet laureate's sister, as saying that Paul Alexander "has had no help from the family... His sources are two women who live in the sticks and habitually talk nonsense about Sylvia."

Anyone who knows anything about Plath would have identified these two women "in the sticks" as her old friends Elizabeth Sigmund and Clarissa Roache. Yet Sigmund has never even met Paul Alexander. Olwyn Hughes, by contrast, has met him many times; indeed, she was one of his main sources.

"For Olwyn to complain that no members of the family co-operated with me is outrageous," Alexander told the *Eye* last week from New York. "It's a bare-faced lie. She talked to me many times, at great length, about Sylvia Plath. Most of the time you can't get her off the subject."

Though Olwyn Hughes is now claiming she doesn't know Alexander, in fact she spent weeks with him while he was researching his biography. "I took her out to dinner many times. I always paid, and I've got the American Express receipts to prove it." He added that if Olwyn wanted to provoke a lawsuit, he'd be only too happy to meet her in court. Meanwhile, a weary Elizabeth Sigmund is also consulting her solicitors with a view to "getting Olwyn to shut up".

'Bookworm'



CONSTRUCTION

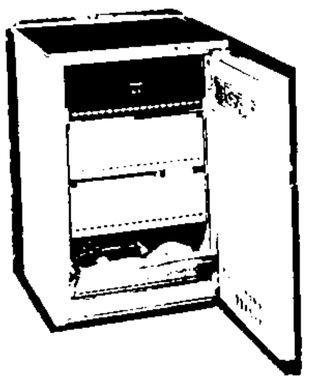
Ta, Mac

BEFORE it loses the election, the Government is still keen to help an old friend, Tarmac Construction, which not only filled the Tory Party cupboard for the last ten years, but also provided a board job for Cecil Parkinson when he was embarrassingly obliged to leave Cabinet in 1984 (he came back much later, a much richer man).

Tarmac of course got a hefty slice of one of the juiciest government contracts handed out to construction companies in the Thatcher years — the useless but very expensive runway at Port Stanley in the Falklands. But this was hardly enough for services rendered; and Tarmac is now to be handed the entire projects staff plus contracts of the Government's Property Services Agency. In addition, the Government has promised the usual largesse (£85 million) to help Tarmac sack PSA people when the firm takes over.

Tarmac made what Tim Yeo, junior environment minister, calls "an unsolicited bid" or PSA. But no one doubts that the whole operation has been planned to speed up the sale before the election. The sale will come as a great relief to Tarmac, which has £35 million worth of claims against the PSA for past contracts which went wrong. The PSA is withholding several millions in liquidated damages from these contracts. No doubt those PSA managers who have resisted Tarmac's claims will be the first to go after the takeover.

CFCs



Cold Comfort

JOHN MAJOR'S enthusiasm for getting rid of chloro fluorocarbons (CFCs) which cause such damage to the ozone layer has not gone down well at the Cold Storage and Distribution Federation.

The well-heeled businessmen who make their money from refrigeration realise they have a lot to lose from swapping CFCs for less dangerous but more expensive substitutes. A recent memo from D.I. Shearer, at the federation's Bracknell headquarters, to "members of a liaison group" sets out the fridge chiefs thinking on the subject.

They have had to concede the demise of the really dangerous CFCs, but are fighting hard to retain R22. This is dangerous enough — but not as dangerous as, say, R12. It is included in the "transitional substances" which the European Community, under its "London Resolution" of 1990, intend to phase out. The EC is preparing its proposals for implementing the London resolution, so the cold storage men are being encouraged to take part in an intensive lobbying campaign to save R22 from what the memo describes as "the well-intentioned but drastic bans promoted by pressures from the Green lobbies". They want R22 legitimised until the year 2040 (if the world still exists by then).

To this end, a new organisation called IGPOL has been formed. IGPOL stands for The Industrial Group for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, so its main purpose will be to insure that industry can hang on to chemicals which damage the ozone layer. As the memo makes clear, a shift from all CFC to its most effective substitute, ammonia, could mean an increase in costs of from 10 to 15 per cent in the industry's costs. Perish the thought (and the ozone layer).

ARMS

Check needed

WHY would the British army want to buy small, hard-to-trace machineguns that are more appropriately used by assassins — and why would it use third parties to try to buy them?

These fascinating questions beg some answers.

In 1990, a Czech-made machinegun called the Scorpion was being manufactured under licence in Bulgaria. This in itself was curious because the Scorpion is a small, rapid-fire weapon that can be held in the hand and is *not* a standard weapon for any known army. The Czechs had some trouble selling it and stopped production — but the Bulgarians did not.

For some reason this assassin's tool interested the British. Through intermediaries — and at the cost of US $1 million — they arranged for the Swiss General Staff to place an order through a local dealer for about a dozen weapons with ammunition. The Bulgarians were happy to deal and eagerly awaited massive orders from the British army through the Swiss intermediaries. So far, however, no big orders have materialised and the curious are asking why.

FACT: The calibration of the weapon would make it extremely difficult to trace should anyone wish to do so.

FINANCE

Busy Beaverbrook

CONSERVATIVES must be hoping that Lord Beaverbrook, the party's treasurer, achieves better results controlling their finances than he has with some of those associated with his own commercial adventures.

Maxwell Aitken, the third baron, is a trustee of the Beaverbrook Foundation and a businessman, and it was in this latter role that he was part of a group that included his one-time partners Charles and Neville Vere-Nichol, all of 11 Old Queen Street, Westminster, who approached the American timber giant International Paper Company with an offer to buy three tracts of timberland in the Mississippi in spring 1988.

Lord Beaverbrook and partners, after prolonged negotiations, finally agreed to find the best part of US $13 million for the purchases, but after a lot of difficulty only managed to stomp up around $2 million in cash.

According to an affidavit filed by IPC's attorney, Spencer Harper, Beaverbrook and his chums had trouble finding any real money whatsoever and, after a period of broken promises and delays, placed their companies under Chapter 11 bankruptcy to avoid IPC entering judgement to secure the balance of the monies owed.

An outfit called the Beaverbrook Canada Foundation put some $600,000 into the venture and it was to protect this, Beaverbrook told the *Eye*, that bankruptcy protection had been sought. Beaverbrook also told the *Eye* that his appraisal of the project took no more than three months before he abandoned it — an assertion not borne out by the documents. He also claimed he was peripheral to the dealings and was not well acquainted with many of them. This is not borne out by the documents either. It is clear that Beaverbrook at all times maintained a close interest in proceedings.

Before the Chapter 11 filings, Beaverbrook and pals managed to sell some $98,000 in hunting leases and bank cash from timber felling. As matters stand, IPC is confident it will get its money eventually. A company spokesman told the *Eye* he felt IPC had been treated very badly by Lord Beaverbrook and his associates and regretted ever having got involved with them.

MAXWELL HOUSE

Cap'n Bobski...

THE devious manner in which the late Cap'n Bob wangled his way into Soviet trade deals in the late 1980s by pulling a three-year "sting" on a Russian newspaper has at last been revealed.

In order to impress Mikhail Gorbachev and Alexander Yakovlev, the architect of *perestroika*, in 1987 Maxwell offered to print and publish the English language edition of their favourite pro-*glasnost* weekly paper, *Moscow News*.

The existing contract printers of the long-established English edition were to be sacked; in future, the paper would be produced at Maxwell's expense from a Mirror Group office at Orbit House, New Fetter Lane, London, and distributed throughout Europe by Pergamon Media plc. Several teams of *Mirror* executives and editors were despatched to Moscow, armed with crates of beer for "our Russian friends".

In return, Maxwell gained access to deals in woodpulp, newsprint and aerospace products with the top Communist trade managers.

"He always stayed at the Communist Party's own hotel, the Oktyabrskaya," says Vladimir Brodetsky, the man who was sent from Moscow to work in Maxwell's offices at Orbit House. "He was very close to the party officials. Using *Moscow News* connections and power, he got to enter the doors of Alexander Yakovlev and Mikhail Gorbachev. His aim was to reach all the Soviet VIPs, with our help."

Maxwell strung the Russian hacks along with his promises for more than three years, working to extract as much as he could from the contacts laid on for him by the paper. But in 1990, the year of his much-publicised weekend visit to Gorbachev in Moscow, the Cap'n pulled the plug on them. "It had been a subtle fraud," Brodetsky told the *Eye* last week. "The negotiations took us three years. The paper lived in London for just five months. Because, by then, RM had got what he wanted.

"He did not promote *Moscow News* in the UK, as he had promised. He did not look for advertisers, or push the paper globally. He cared nothing for the loyal regular subscribers. His man handling the *Moscow News* business, Mr Good, was never able to keep the promises because the only man who could take any decision was RM himself." Loyal readers complained that the paper they had ordered by subscription for years was now failing to reach them, or even reach the newsagents.

Brodetsky had been promised a handsome salary, a "decent flat" and a BMW car from the Maxwell fleet garage in Oxford. When he arrived in London with his wife, however, he found he was given just £80 a week to live on. "My wife and I were forced to live in what must have been the smallest room in the building next to Maxwell House. It measured about five square metres. There was another tiny room with a shower and a loo for us next to the public toilets used by the staff of the *European*, RM's favourites at that time."

Maxwell's axing of the paper in 1990 was hushed up so that not a word would appear in the British press before the fat man arrived in Moscow. But on the day Cap'n Bob was to meet Gorbachev, while the *Sunday Mirror* and *People* were obediently trumpeting the historic encounter, the *Independent on Sunday* revealed his perfidy. Relations between Gorby and Cap'n Bob were distinctly cool thereafter, and the Soviet leader retaliated by distancing himself from the absurd Gorbachev-Maxwell Foundation of Minneapolis. This was just as well: the foundation turned out to have been just like the MGN edition of *Moscow News* — yet another stunt which Maxwell had no intention of following through.

ENERGY

NATIONAL POWER
POWERGEN

Edwards the confessor

BRITISH COAL is examining the expenses claim of Malcolm Edwards — "bottle by bottle", says one insider — to see if it can somehow build up a case against the departing commercial director who is being driven out of his job and whose pay-off is still being negotiated (see *Eyes passim*).

Last week Edwards said openly for the first time what had been attributed to him during the weeks when he had been silenced by his enemy, Neil Clarke, the new coal chairman. (Clark had ordered him not to say a word in public while pay-off negotiations were continuing, but he was over-ridden by the Commons select committee on energy which can demand witnesses give evidence and answer questions.)

In his evidence, Edwards was handled with sympathy by MPs on all sides, and they are now preparing a report on the consequences of privatisation that will deeply embarrass John Wakeham, the energy secretary. An unexpected twist has been provided by the intervention of Margaret Thatcher. She has joined the row by inviting Edwards to visit her and has expressed her regret at what is being done to him. He was close to her during the miners' strike and, according to the authoritative *International Coal Report*, she believes a great debt is owed to him for keeping the power stations running.

There was also an element of fellow-feeling about her invitation: Edwards was being driven out by Clarke, who was appointed by Wakeham; and Thatcher remembers it was Wakeham who sounded out Tory party feeling and then told her she would have to go. She later suspected that Wakeham, whom she once described as "an absolute disaster", was over-eager to push her out.

So what did Edwards say in his evidence? He confirmed that he believed the coal industry was in danger of being reduced from the present 55 mines to 12-14, and that jobs could fall from 48,000 to as few as 13.000. He identified the rush to build combined cycle gas turbines (CCGTs) as the principal threat to the industry, and here too the principal offender is Wakeham.

From 1975 until two years ago, it was illegal to burn gas to make electricity. It is inefficient and damaging to the environment, and will run out within 15 years or less if anything like the projected rate of use is permitted. A sensible policy would be to use gas for heating and obtain electricity increasingly from non-polluting sources which offer free fuel (such as wind, wave and the tide). But this means major investment. Instead, the energy department got to work on Brussels and persuaded it to rescind its gas directive.

A main motive was the belief that gas was cheaper than coal. Edwards argued that this was not so. But the regional electricity companies (RECs) and the generators, National Power and PowerGen, were building new CCGTs — which are inexpensive to build but are sensitive to future gas prices. (Those prices will shoot sky high once the the coal industry has been destroyed.) Also coming will be imported coal and one million tons of orimulsion, the dirtiest fuel of all, which Edwards said could well be increased to imports of 3-5 million tons.

What he was too polite to say, perhaps because of personal friendship, was that this would all be very convenient for John Baker, chief executive of National Power and the major figure in the electricity industry. He would be able to play one supplier off against another — and ensure that the benefit came to the overpaid directors and shareholders of the privatised industry. The biggest shareholder is, of course, the energy secretary with 40 per cent of the shares.

RAILWAY NEWS

Heartlands by-pass surgery

PERPETUAL chaos looms in the West Midlands following the announcement that British Rail is to close the region's main junction, Birmingham New Street, to InterCity trains and build a new £50 million station, Birmingham Heartlands, on wasteland four miles from the city centre and isolated from the big residential areas.

Strangely BR has not announced why this drastic upheaval is taking place. Nor has it confirmed that half a million people will be by-passed once the new routes are transferred to the Heartlands line, since they will omit Sandwell & Dudley, Wolverhampton and, remarkably, Birmingham International, home of the NEC.

Instead the PR machine is in overdrive. Heartlands station, it is claimed by project manager Colin Andrews, will eschew "draughty platforms and avoid timetable announcements drowned out by noisy diesel engines." It will also be "the envy of European cities... with moving pavements... fully-enclosed with heating in winter and upholstered seats. When it is finished it will not just be a station but a focus for the community" — even though the "community" will live nowhere near it.

What Andrews hasn't explained is that the project results entirely from BR Channel tunnel bosses' confusion over what to do when Euro trains eventually reach Brummieland. The Chunnel trains (the provinces are to get one a day) will be 18 carriages long and can only call at stations with super-lengthy platforms, such as Rugby. From there BR wants to send the front half further north to Manchester and the rear end to Birmingham which, unfortunately, is also further up the line.

Unfortunately the trains won't be able to avoid Rugby and dropping in at Birmingham New Street is impossible because the platforms are too short! Solution? Close New Street and build a costly new station on the wrong side of Birmingham, and to justify the scheme transfer all other major services there.

Ironically, Birmingham Snow Hill, which had the right platforms and all but closed down 25 years ago, is now being lined up by BR to take services between Birmingham and Paddington due to the crumbling nature of the Euston line. No one at BR seems to have thought of reopening city centre-based Snow Hill rather than wasting £50 million on building Heartlands.

BOXING

Pulling punches

JONATHAN RENDALL of the *Independent on Sunday* was remarkably kind in his report of the Mike Tyson rape trial on Tyson's promoter/manager Don King.

Disparaging those who constantly harp back to the man with the electrified hair's conviction for stomping a man to death, Rendall instead concentrated his fire on the failings and rip-offs perpetrated by Tyson's previous white managers, Cus D'Amato, Jim Jacobs and Bill Cayton.

There was no dwelling on King's mishandling and exploitation of boxers, such as former heavyweight champion Tim Witherspoon, currently suing King for $25 million alleging fraud and conflict of interest.

Naturally this has absolutely no connection with the negotiations a Jonathan Rendall, adviser to British featherweight champion Colin McMillan, has had and may have again with one Don King regarding a possible $2 million package which could see McMillan fight for a world title... promoted by King.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Money up in smoke

THE DEMAND by Jacques Delors, European Commission president, for an extra £14 billion to fund a 30 per cent increase in the community budget over five years is only reasonable given the commission's total inability to restrain its manic empire building.

While Delors plans to increase the annual budget of £46 billion to £60 billion to help the poorer southern Mediterranean members, the commission has been unable to cut its own expenses. On the contrary, in most sectors spending is up and bigger increases are planned.

The hugely expensive common agricultural policy (CAP) has already provided big helpings of gravy for 20,000 or so commission Eurocrats, not to mention Europe's farmers. Its cost is so high, it is almost impossible to compute. So, instead of reducing the CAP's costs, the commission has done all it can to further its outdated policy of paying farmers for food it doesn't need.

It has increased the quantity of beef that can be stored; it has allocated more money to finance the disposal of stored milk products (having first paid to put it in store); and authorised the advance payment for sheep and goat produce before it has been inspected (instead of payment in arrears after proper certification, as before).

The commission's only attempt to limit spending has been in the tobacco market; and that was after subsidies for overproduction of community tobacco exceeded their limits in 1989, due largely to the Italians. The commission's attempts at belt-tightening have been farcical.

In 1990 the commission launched an inquiry into the Italian market with all the urgency of a comatose snail. After lengthy and repeated committee meetings and extensive travel (all expenses paid), the Eurocrats found a peculiar hybrid variety of tobacco which sprouted leaves faster than anything they'd seen. Although the leaves were of dubious quality, they qualified for full subsidies.

At about this time Italian Eurocrats were unusually active and busied themselves encouraging this unprecedented growth in tobacco production and cash payments. By 1991 the commission had finally issued an instruction to reduce the subsidy, with particular reference to Italy. Sadly their bureaucratic prowess proved much slower than the Italian growers and their sprouting hybrid tobacco plant. Several harvesting seasons had already passed as the Eurocrats toiled — and Europe's taxpayers continued to dole out good money for unmarketable tobacco.

PRIVATISATION

ROLLS ROYCE

Rolls leak

PANIC has broken out at Rolls Royce — and no where more so than at its Crewe factory, which prides itself on its "excellence" in producing the Corniche.

Recently 40 of the gas-guzzling monsters have been returned to the site with their canvas roofs leaking like sieves.

Rolls Royce is also anxious that nobody should find out or publish the fact that the complete gear boxes for all Rolls Royce cars are now being bought in from the United States. Meanwhile the management continues to search for a "partner" to invest the necessary £200 million to keep the ailing company afloat.

FACT: Rolls Royce last went bust 20 years ago, was nationalised to save it, and then privatised as soon as it was making a profit. The company plans to keep its present plight hidden from the media until after the election lest anyone should draw any hasty conclusions about the "success" of privatisation.

In the City

"THE RICH are different from us," announced F. Scott Fitzgerald. "Yes," growled Ernest Hemingway. "They have more money".

If ever doubted, the truth of that verdict when it comes to fraud and crooked City suits has once again been amply demonstrated since the last *Eye* by confirmation of the expected collapse of the second Guinness trial, following the collapse of Guinness Three, and the Blue Arrow non-sentences.

Take, for example, the sudden decision of the Serious Fiasco Office to drop charges against Cazenove partner David Mayhew on the basis of "fresh evidence" — almost four years after he was charged and three years since the Guinness trial judge Mr Justice Henry ruled there was a case to answer.

What exactly was this "fresh evidence"? No one is saying publicly — and for good reason, in the view of those with knowledge of the investigation. The strong suspicion is that nothing materially had changed as far as the facts were concerned. It was still a case of whether a jury would believe Mayhew or two Bank Leu officials, plus other witnesses, regarding the purchase of £75 million worth of Distillers shares.

What Mayhew and Cazenove had pulled out of the hat was an expert witness, Peter Meinertzhagen (Luke M. late of Cazenove no relation), of rival broker bluebloods Hoare Govett, who would testify that Mayhew's actions had been perfectly proper. The SFO after four years had failed to recruit a City expert of similar standing.

This news appears to have finally tipped the SFO into swallowing the Mayhew case — a case it always knew to be at best 50:50. For while the facts may not have changed, the SFO's will had undergone a severe diminution. Under pressure from the Mayhew legal camp to respond to a new initiative restating his determined defence, knowing that Guinness Two involving Mayhew's co-defendant Roger Seelig was about to collapse, not wanting to risk another expensive humiliation after losing half the Blue Arrow case, the SFO looked for the exit using the smoke screen of "fresh evidence" that never was.

It will be interesting to see how the Department of Trade & Industry report into Guinness handles Mayhew's role.

Then there is the escape of macho merchant banker Seelig because he might do "something irrevocable" as a result of the pressure from a trial whose length had been grotesquely extended by his own decision to defend himself.

"It's not a fucking act," a sobbing, super-sensitive Seelig shouted at an alarmed Mr Justice Henry in his final hysterical outburst on the last day in January, almost 70 days since the September start, that decreed the show could not go on.

Yet in other instances such a decision would by no means be so certain. A defendant in the Brinks-MAT trial has been given six months to recover from a heart problem and then it will be on with the show. Defendants who threaten suicide can be taken into custody for their own protection. But that is only for blue collar villains.

Roger the Dodger is the fourth Guinness defendant to successfully play the medical card. First up was the ex-Sir Jack Lyons. Health problems, which included a convenient form of selective amnesia, saved him from jail. Supposedly irreversible Alzheimer's disease sprung Ernest Saunders from jail on an appeal court-reduced sentence. Today Saunders is alive and well and blaming his medication rather than a medical miracle for the zombie-like state that fooled doctors and judges. Lord Spens's heart problems helped to make the SFO decide not to try him again. The courts are notoriously less understanding with less fragrant defendants when it comes to their health — Guiseppe Conlon of the Maguire Seven died in jail before being acquitted.

A second Guinness Two could have taken place with an expert counsel and lawyers provided for Seelig on legal aid — as happened with Saunders — on the basis that this was required for the proper administration of justice. One factor in Seelig representing himself was his insistence that he could be his own best advocate — a decision which it was always known would result in an overlong trial. Instead Seelig's choice was allowed to prevail with the consequent anticipated farcical outcome.

Even more farcical was the performance of Mr Justice McKinnon in the Blue Arrow trial. He effectively acquitted the four convicted defendants by not only giving them suspended sentences without even a penny fine, but found the SFO guilty for bringing the case and fined the taxpayer up to £35 million by awarding costs to the defendants. A nice — maybe £30 million — earner for all those briefs and solicitors who never do legal aid work, never turn out for the Stefan Kiszkos or Birmingham Sixes… but are always happy to help the Maxwells, Mayhews and County NatWests.

Clearly irritated by the jury's refusal to do what he expected and directed — ie acquit everyone (juries often do not take kindly to such a one-sided direction over a matter which the men in wigs keep insisting is "a matter for you") — McKinnon got his own back while denying Jonathan Cohen, David Reed, Nicholas Wells and Martin Gibbs were "getting off lightly" on the basis that they had not meant to break the law.

With a background in the civil courts McKinnon not only seemed blind to the idea of crooks in suits, but failed to curb the excesses of his fellow learned friends by incompetently allowing a third of the 183 days to be wasted in legal arguments which should have been decided pre-trial.

No observer expected jail sentences for the County NatWest and Phillips & Drew executives in Blue Arrow — although similar market rigging trials in the US have ended in jail terms. But fines — which would have been expected in any regulatory proceeding — were the very minimum deterrent. But once again there was a two-tier tariff, as with insider dealer Geoffrey Collier, represented by NatWest chairman Lord Alexander, who was merely fined £25,000 by Mr Justice Farquharson while Lester Piggott was jailed for three years by the same judge for tax evasion.

When sentencing Saunders to five years in prison, Mr Justice Henry made clear his belief that the courts must be seen to treat the captain of industry who cheats or steals just like the clerk. That standard is clearly not shared by all judges. Justice is far from blind to men in suits with the right background, the right accents and the right lawyers.

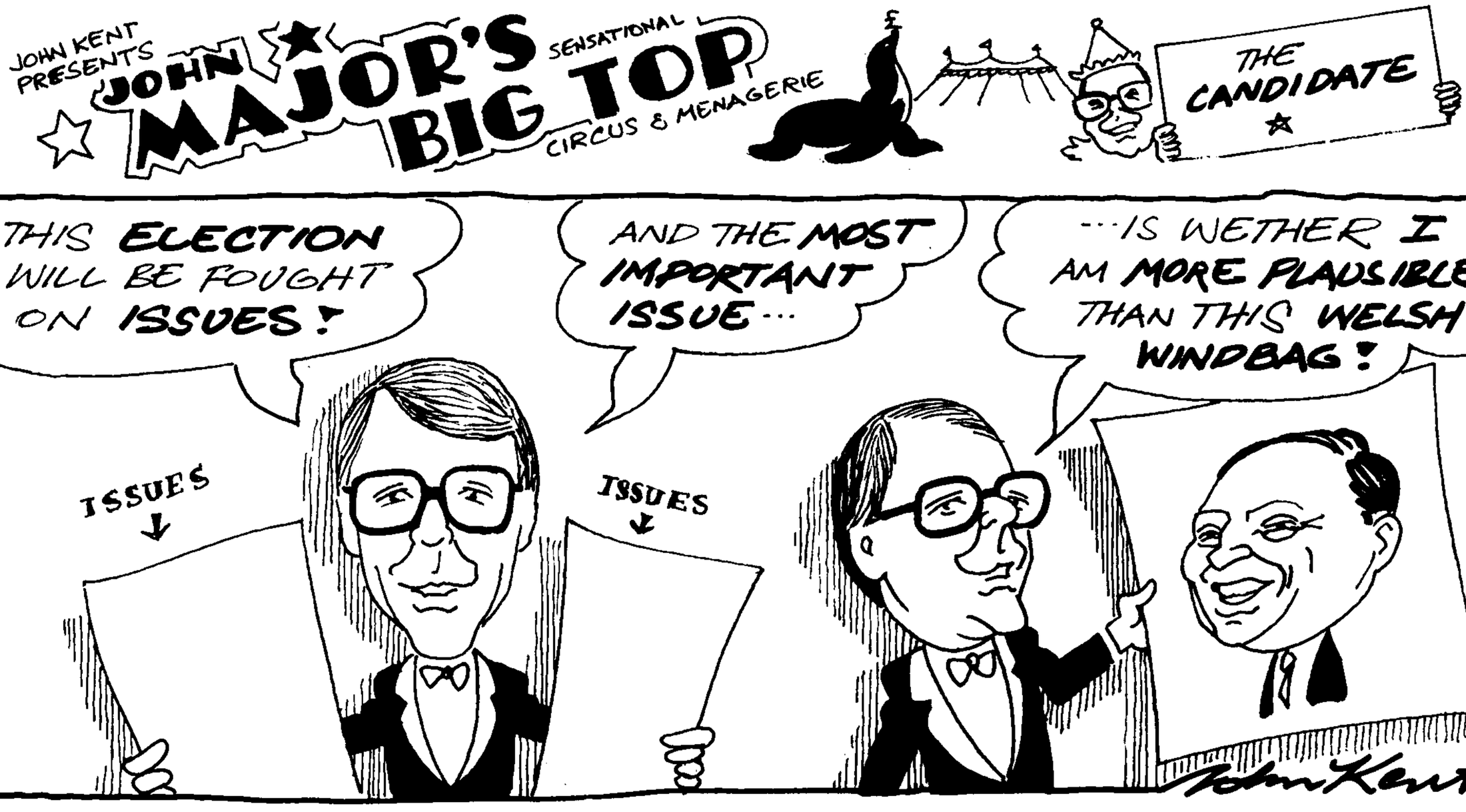
SORELY-tried shareholders of Granada Group who attend the annual meeting on 3 March will perhaps feel less likely to raise the subject of former director David Plowright's pre-going away present of his £425,000 house for £81,153 or the scale of his contribution to the outgoings over 15 years now that he has gone.

But they might like to know that this was part of an option agreement made in 1978 by the Granada TV subsidiary after Plowright had been in residence for two years. The house was bought for some £70,000 — the cost price of the option has remained unchanged since 1984 when the house was valued at £150,000. Granada shareholders, unlike those of Marks & Spencer in 1982, were not given a vote on this perk when it was disclosed.

But shareholders might pay attention to the fact that any pay-off to Plowright, likely to be £400,000 to £500,000, will be decided by a board that includes leading QC Mark Littman. Littman not only presumably voted on the £579,000 golden goodbye to sacked chief executive director Derek Lewis, but at Burton Group also voted for the equally generous service contracts and pay-offs to sacked chairman Sir Ralph Halpern (£2 million) and like chief executive Laurence Cooklin (£773,000).

IT SEEMS the sudden departure of Stephen Hinchcliffe as chairman of James Wilkes in the middle of the takeover bid from Petrocon may not have been entirely amiable or voluntary. Wilkes's advisers Rothschilds are said to have insisted on this as the price of their continued support. What forced their hand were fears, no doubt greatly exaggerated, about the outcome of the West Midlands police investigation into matters relating to WB Industries and a private investigation into Hinchcliffe's colourful business background.

'Slicker'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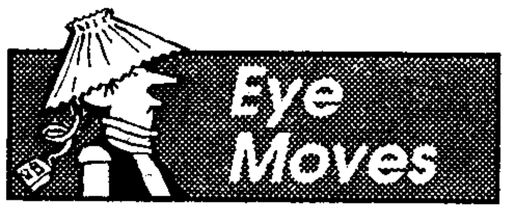

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GRANDCHILDREN OF Albion anthology poets reading/signings Thurs 5 March Waterstones, 9 Garrick St, WC2 from 6.30-8.30 LKJ Merle Collins & M. Horovitz; Thurs 26 March Fiona P-K + jazz po 6.30 both FREE (GofA book £11 post free from New Departures, Bisley, Glos GL6 7BU).

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RICHMOND DINING CLUB. Single and interested in wining and dining locally? 081-977 3433.

CZECHMATE — 500+ cultured, sophisticated ladies — doctors, teachers, lawyers, radio, TV producers, "the Arts", from Czechoslovakia, seek sincere gentlemen for marriage. As featured on BBC News, Anglia TV, BBC World Service, Radio and TV, Sunday Observer. 0582-25960.

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RUSSIAN LADY 30, slim attractive (daughter 7 years old) seeks mature reliable gentleman for possible marriage. ALA. Box 8588.

HANDSOME MALE, tall, slim, amusing, intelligent, athletic, successful and discreet seeks suitably interesting female. Box 8088.

FEMALE SEEKS eccentric to delight in. Devon. Box 5588.

GOOD-NATURED, good-looking freelance writer, 6ft, slim, 53, married, bald, seeks lady for uncomplicated romance. Photo appreciated. London/Home Counties. Box 9088.

ARE YOU A London-based male aged between 35 and 45, intelligent, considerate, goodlooking and with a sense of humour? Do you enjoy good wine, good food and a good woman? Photo please with reply. Box 9688.

GLASGOW/ Dunbartonshire/ Highlands recently exiled Sassenach male professional, 31, slim, shortish, handsomish seeks petite, attractive, witty sloanette/professional for social intercourse and introduction to Scottish life. Photo please. Box 9788.

ATTRACTIVE, easy-going, wellish-off man (early 50s) with more vices than virtues now in London SW13, hopefully soon in France, seeks a woman who can match wits with the best but doesn't mind being seen at her worst, who can exchange the town for the country without a second thought, who is quick to laugh and slow to be displeased. And raring to begin again! A photo pleases. Box 9888.

COMPANY DIRECTOR, young 42, single again, seeks gorgeous fun lady 20-45. Photo appreciated. Box 9988.

HANDSOME, TALL professional black guy, 23, global interests, seeks confident female companion for laughs, travel, romance? Box 11988.

INTERESTING, tall, personable bachelor, 50, would like to meet a slim, sensual, educated lady, 30s+, for a discreet, uncomplicated, liberal liaison. Mid-Lincolnshire. Box 2488.

URGENTLY REQUIRED, intelligent, attractive, humorous, sensual friend and live-out lover, 45-55 who could become live-in for similar (adventurous and successful creative woman based Midlands and London). Photo and phone number please. Box 2588.

GOODLOOKING, successful, assertive gentleman with own business, aged 39, seeking goodlooking lady companion with excellent figure, aged under 35 for a fun one-to-one relationship who wishes to enjoy a luxurious lifestyle. Photo and phone number please. Box 9486.

TALL, DARK, handsome, rich, 36, seeks any female well rounded, 20-30, who will accept alternative N/S veg runner. 5'7", 42, ALA. Box 5486.

ELIGIBLE BUT slightly eccentric bachelor, professional, solvent, 37, 6ft, interests include classic cars, sailing, theatre, countryside, seeks attractive lady, under 40, to share life and love in London and Salisbury. Box 7486.

MALE PUBLIC sector trade unionist, 47, actively fighting the bosses and weight problem seeks female inspiration. Usual cultural activities. London. ALA. Box 6588.

THREE ATTRACTIVE gregarious females would like to dine and be amused by three witty attractive men between 30-40, nothing heavy. Photo guarantees reply. Box 6688.

WISHING YOU HAD a boyfriend? Then do something about it and write to me. Good looking, caring guy (25) seeks sweet and sexy girl to go out with. London/Surrounds/South. ALA promise. Box 8188.

EX-PAT (33, damned handsome, home owner, etc) tired of Guinness bottles, needs a damned attractive, adventurous "seat of her pants" girl, 26-30, for September home coming, to refresh memories that Saudi could not reach. Sense of humour vital, photo appreciated. Box 2688.

SOLVENT, professional, bright man. Single, slim, mid-thirties, well-travelled seeks pleasant female companion. First advert. Midlands/anywhere. Box 2788.

FTSE — potential long term investor (M, 20s, Public School and graduate, varied interests, London) seeks glamour stock with sound fundamentals and firm assets to explore hedonistic synergies. Brief report with recent illustration to Box 2888.

WIDOWER, 55, successful, cultured graduate, misses humour, companionship and sensual bliss with younger wife. Seeks new relationship. London/anywhere. Exchange sufficient details for restaurant date. Box 2988.

STILL FREE and single; handsome, healthy, amusing, British, France-based male, 32, seeks harmonious liaison with attractive, non-depressive, adventurous 20s female. Interesting letter/photo ensures same. Box 3088.

SMALL AND CURVY lady store manager, 31, seeks intelligent, attractive, professional gentleman to distract her. N. London/Herts. Photo please. Box 3188.

TROPICAL WINTER holiday. Fun girl (20s) sought by (30s) lawyer. Box 3288.

TALL, PROFESSIONAL personable male, fit, turned 40, seeks caring woman, 30 something for dining and wherever romance might lead us. (London) Box 3388.

INTELLIGENT, SOLVENT man, late thirties, wide-ranging interests, tall, slim, articulate and married seeks slim, attractive, southern lady for inventive, exciting, physical relationship. Escape your rut for a non-serious, fun affair while we both enjoy an horizon-broadening friendship. Box 7988.

BRIGHT DISHY redhead, 37, seeks real man, N/S and movies, meals and more. Maybe marriage? London. Box 3488.

CORNWALL. Two independent women 35ish wish to meet unattached civilized men for company and entertainment. Box 3588.

GOOD-HUMOURED, slightly bewildered male, 46, North London, seeks quietly passionate encounter with woman of shape with warmth and intelligence. Photo appreciated. ALA. Box 3688.

INTELLIGENT, successful, civilised professional, E. Midlands, 42, enjoys life — seeks lady to enjoy it with — age 25-45, attractive, sparky and warm. Anything from occasional adventures to passionate affair. Letter/photo please. Box 3788.

FIFTY PLUS smallish London female needs fifty plus tallish male as regular partner. Could it, perchance, be you, dear reader? Box 3888.

DISCREET, QUIET writer, male, forties, would like to visit you during day for mutual pleasing. Somewhat shy, gentle person. Are you his female equivalent? ALA. Box 3988.

TALL, SLIM, handsome man seeks daytime secret affair with North East lady. Box 4088.

SANE, CHEERFUL, intellectual, successful man, sought by similar woman, attractive, 42, divorced. Box 4188.

EXTRAMARITAL FILLIP needed to rejuvenate ensnared, overworked, professional, 52, tall, slim, graduate seeks occasional respite from voracious family and business with like-minded, warm, matured, forty something female. West Mids. Box 4288.

N.W. WIDOW potentially merry requires kind, humorous, N/S professional male, 48-55 who enjoys life's good things to assist. Box 4388.

"EPIMETHEUS" seeks "Pandora" aged fifty plus. SAE guarantees pictures/postcard or flowers. Box 4488.

HANDSOME (solvent) knight, (34), looking for damsel (26-33) to rescue for wining/dining, dancing, travel and much more! Sense of humour, sincerity, intelligence and, of course, presentability guarantees salvation. Wilts/Avon. Box 4588.

ATTRACTIVE, intelligent man, professional, 44, based East Midlands, cultural and hedonistic interests, seeks similar stylish, passionate humorous woman. Photos exchanged. Box 6788.

TALL GENT, 33, likes quiet places, countryside, concerts, seeks attractive lady, age immaterial for genuine sincere friendship. Cumbria/anywhere. Box 6888.

PROFESSIONAL female designer, (31) disguised as dizzy blonde seeks unattached soulmate (male 28-34) to accompany adventurous journey through life! N.W. Photo please. Box 6988.

PLUMP, PROSAIC, past her prime. Oxfordshire woman (45) seeks quirky man keen on countryside and the arts to transmogrify her self-image! Box 7088.

ATTRACTIVE, *intelligent and cross-cultural thirties lady, of Ceylonese descent,* is leaping into it this year to seek that special Valentine. Box 8688.

GREAT LOOKING man, 39, athletic, professional, well educated. Seeks similar woman for passionate, uninhibited relationship. Yorks, Derbys, Lincs. Box 7288.

GENTLE, LOVING man, 34, intelligent, seeks understanding girlfriend who will let him kiss her hands and feet. Genuine. Phone no please. Box 7388.

ATTRACTIVE, elegant, slim lady (50s), intelligent with many interests, seeks similar man (approx 50-60) for love and companionship. London area. Box 7488.

YOUNG GRADUATE, 23, seeks moral free female. Must be into everything. Cheshire/Manchester. Box 7588.

LONDON, BERKSHIRE- based attractive, witty, bright female, 29, smoker, reqs male under 40 as above. Photo please. ALA. Box 7688.

SOMEBODY TO LOVE? Slim, caring, blonde 30 seeks (London) professional (long term). Address? Box 7788.

MAD SCIENTIST (male) seeks mad collaborator (female) for experiment in living happily ever after. 37, 5'6". Likes travel, food, fast cars, gardening. Located Oxfordshire (M40, J7). Box 4688.

TALL, SUCCESSFUL doctor, 31, seeks attractive lady for days and nights of mutual appreciation. Age no consequence. Photo please. North West. Box 4788.

SPARKLING, writing, loving woman (39) — graduate, teacher, mum — hopes her special forever man sees this. Exchange photos? Devon. Box 4888.

SEXY, ATTRACTIVE, intelligent, loving lady, 42 seeks tall, generous millionaire with yacht for mutual sharing. Box 4988.

SENSUALIST SEEKS strong, intelligent, caring woman for fun and physicality. Box 5088.

SELF-RESTRAINED for too long? Underused bachelor, 38, very presentable, witty, multilingual, seeks bright (shy?) female, 24-36 for mutual soothing and catharsis. North. Box 5188.

MALE, 44 seeks "Eye Type" female living in South Staffs/North Birmingham area for meeting of hearts and minds. Box 5288.

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, early fifties, wishes to meet an attractive intelligent lady at home in ballgown or wellies. Photo appreciated. ALA. Box 5388.

SEXY, TALL, single, 30s, intelligent witty? Career girl (25) independent, stubborn, selfish is waiting to fall madly in love. Photo/letter. N. East. Box 5488.

PART-TIME lover, fulltime soulmate, with grey cells, vitality, politics and humour required by attractive, successful workaholic woman, 34, in desperate need of weekend unwinding. Currently Sheffield based but mobile. Letter/photo appreciated. Box 6088.

ELIGIBLE BORED, skinny, easy-going bachelor, 25, wishes to meet ladies (all types) for casual weekends at country retreat. No obligations, just fun (probably). Non smoking teetotallers need not reply. Box 5788.

CHESHIRE CAT who's lost her smile seeks Mad Hatter for adventures in Wonderland! N. West, 30+, please write. Box 5888.

INTELLIGENT, attractive, petite, lively, honest woman, single, 38, mother, seeks compatible man, 5'8"+. South. Box 5988.

EXCEPTIONALLY AVERAGE male, 35 loves blues, rock, sport. Seeks intelligent, attractive, free spirited lady, 25-45, romance, love, then passion, lust, possibly London, Herts border. Letter/photo please. Box 6188.

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